O.P. 2

LISTENER'S LURE

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

UNIFORM WITH THIS VOLUME

OVER BEMERTON'S

LONDON LAVENDER

MR. INGLESIDE

ROSE AND ROSE

GENEVRA'S MONEY

LOITERER'S HARVEST

OLD LAMPS AND NEW

ONE DAY AND ANOTHER

FIRESIDE AND SUNSHINE

LISTENER'S LURE

AN OBLIQUE NARRATION

BY

E. V. LUCAS

EIGHTEENTH EDITION

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THE PEOPLE IN THE BOOK

ALBOURNE, Dennis. A protégé of Mrs. Pink's. A journalist.
ARUNDEL, Gurney. Squire of Winfield.
ARUNDEL, Mrs. His wife.
ARUNDEL, Cyril. Their son.
ARUNDEL, Joan. Their daughter.
BAMSIDE-BLOCK, Mrs. A vicar's widow.
BATES, Nelly. A schoolfellow of Cynthia Hyde.
BELOE, Mrs. An old woman.
BERTHA. A flower-girl.
BOK, Dr. Greeley. An American religionist.
CAPTAIN, A.
COGAN, Miss. A deranged lady.
CONRAN, Charles. Mrs. Pink's factotum.
CRASK, Mr. Miss Fase's bank manager.
CUNNINGHAM, Mrs. Miss Mitt's employer.
DAMP, Algernon. *See* Farrar.
DEUCE. A fox-terrier.
FARRAR, Algernon. Originally Algernon Damp, the friend of Jack Frome.
FASE, Charlotte. Edith Graham's aunt.
FIELDING, Miss Adelaide. Mrs. Pink's sister.
FROME, The Rev. Augustus. Rector of Winfield.
FROME, John Lindsay. His son.
FROME, Gwendolen Mary. His Daughter.
GIANT, A.
GIGI. A French child.
GRAHAM, Edith. Lynn Harberton's Ward.
GUIDE, A.
HARBERTON, Annie. Lynn Harberton's sister.
HARBERTON, Lynn, of Winfield. A literary dilettante. Guardian of Edith Graham.
HARBERTON, Wordsworth. Lynn Harberton's brother.
HENNESSY. *See* Ings.

HYDE, Cynthia. Mrs. Pink's niece.
HYDE, Herbert Chisholm. Her husband.
HYDE, Arthur. Their eldest son.
HYDE, Dermot. Their second son.
INGS, Dr. Prescott. An American religionist (whose real name is Hennessy).
LARK, Mr. A friend of Miss Fase.
LENOX, The Rev. Hercules. Miss Somerscale's fiancé.
MARGARET. Lynn Harberton's old nurse.
MITT, Lydia. A governess.
ORTON, Mr. A county gentleman.
OSBORNE, Enid. A little girl.
PARTRIDGE, Mr. A dowser.
PEDDER, Job. Lynn Harberton's gardener.
PEMBER, Mr. Miss Fase's chemist.
PERIVALE, Mr. A young mystic.
PIMPO. A clown.
PINK, The Rev. Wilberforce. A retired clergyman of the Church of England.
PINK, Mrs. His wife, who lives apart from him. Edith Graham's employer.
POULY, *père*. A bull-fighter.
POULY, *fils*. His son.
RADBONE, Mr. Miss Fase's butcher.
RING, Mrs. Lynn Harberton's housekeeper.
RODWELL, Orme. Mrs. Pink's nephew. A literary youth.
ROYCE, Sir Herbert. Lynn Harberton's half-brother.
SOMERSCALES, Eileen. An old schoolfellow of Edith Graham's.
STUNT. A spaniel.
TOOTELL, Mrs. An old woman.
TRIMBER, Mrs. Edith Graham's landlady at Winfield.
WILLOCKS, Mr. A churchwarden.

The documents that follow belong to a period between September 1905 and June 1906.

LISTENER'S LURE

FROM LYNN HARBERTON, OF THE MANOR HOUSE, WINFIELD, GENTLEMAN, AND EDITOR OF THE BOLT COURT EDITION OF BOSWELL'S "JOHNSON" (IN 12 VOLS.), TO EDITH GRAHAM, HIS WARD AND AMANUENSIS, LODGING AT MRS. TRIMBER'S, CHURCH COTTAGE, WINFIELD

(By Hand)

1st September 1905

EDITH DEAR,

I have something to tell you which I should have the greatest pain and difficulty in saying in your presence; and so I write it instead. This is both cowardly and sensible, like so many actions which look well in biographies and are rewarded in the world. Briefly, my dear child, the time has come for you to leave Winfield and begin to live your own life. For too long you have been living mine and Doctor Johnson's. But now that the Doctor is edited and finished, and I have no plan in my head for further work, and no inclination to begin again until the spring (if then), you must go away and be yourself. We have been very happy; but it was a happiness

that could not last and probably should not. I am a middle-aged, crotchety, self-protective bookworm and idler; you are young and enterprising and generous, and the world needs you and you need the world. So I am going to steel my heart and do what your father would have wished, which is to find you a post in London. The many other things I could say and perhaps should say in so many words you will find between each sentence of this very slowly-written letter. Don't answer it. Just say that you agree and we will begin the campaign.

Yours
L. H.

EDITH GRAHAM TO LYNN HARBERTON

(By Hand)

DEAR GUARDIAN,

Your letter does not distress me so much as you feared, because of course I knew it had to be. I knew this was all too happy to last, but I wish you would not say that it perhaps should not last. I shall never agree with you about things like that; nothing shall make me meet unhappiness half-way as you do. As you have no more use for me as a secretary I must of course find something to do, just as I should have to if we were not friends. Please do not be unhappy about it, because you will be sure to be interested in something else soon and

begin all over again, and then you will want me again. Wherever I am, you will only have to say you want me, and I shall come. Do let us be happy now, for the little while before we go away. You do not say where you are going or for how long, or what is to become of the Manor House and Mrs. Ring and the servants and Deuce. You will tell me at dinner, won't you?

Yours
E. G.

P.S. Don't call yourself middle-aged. Thirty-seven is not middle-aged; or if it is, twenty-five must be nearly so, and I hate to think that.

FROM THE "DAILY TELEGRAPH"

Wanted at once. Governess for two children. Must be Lady. Music. Quiet refined home. Three servants kept. Apply Mrs. C., "Belle Vue," Bedford.

MISS CHARLOTTE FASE, EDITH GRAHAM'S AUNT ON THE MOTHER'S SIDE, TO EDITH GRAHAM

THE LAURELS
GRANGE-OVER-SANDS

MY DEAR EDITH,

I am not, as you know, given either to asking favours or offering advice, but I should like to oblige

my neighbour Mrs. Wootton-Bassett, a very nice cultured lady who took Miss Passmore's house furnished for the summer, at much too low a figure, I think, only three guineas and the use of the tennis things and all the wall fruit, and who is just going. She is the widow of a poet at Bewdley who published quite a number of volumes in his lifetime, but who was the victim of a conspiracy among the critics and so is not known, and her great passion is collecting autographs. She has of course a great many of her husband's, and one of Mrs. Alec Tweedie's, but she wants to make her collection really representative, and when I said that my niece assisted Mr. Harberton, the editor of Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, which is a book I could never get on with very well—so scrappy and a little coarse in places, not at all nice employment for a young girl, I think—nothing would do but I must write to you for Mr. Harberton's autograph and any more that he could give. Mrs. Wootton-Bassett, who naturally knows the habits of literary men, says that he must of course get several interesting letters from important authors by every post. She particularly wants the autograph of Mr. T. P. O'Connor, which she says she understands is very hard to get. Will you do what you can for me and I shall be greatly obliged. We shall miss Mrs. Wootton-Bassett's society very much, she is most intellectual and never travels without several of the Temple Classics. She has given me three of her husband's books, which I am sure I

shall enjoy thoroughly, after the new housemaid comes.

I must stop now or I shall miss the post.

Your loving
AUNT CHARLOTTE

P.S. Mr. Lark has just come in with the sad news that Mr. Saunders the lawyer has had a stroke. You do not know him, but you will I am sure be sorry. Such a nice kind lawyer too. I have heard of people recovering completely from such visitations. It is the third that is fatal, I am told. Perhaps Mr. Saunders will be quite himself again soon, but as he has had two strokes already I am rather doubtful. We must hope for the best.

DR. GREELEY BOK TO MRS. WILBERFORCE PINK

SHAKESPEARE PRIVATE HOTEL
BLOOMSBURY PLACE, W.C.

MY DEAR MADAM,

I should crave your pardon for thus intruding upon you were it not that I have an introduction from our mutual friend Dr. Russell Mynde, whom I consider to be one of the greatest forces in contemporary mentality, albeit I cannot see eye to eye with him in every particular. Doubtless he has mentioned my name to you, and I need therefore not introduce

myself further, beyond saying that I am probably the only Anglo-Saxon exponent of pure Confucianism now before the public.

My career has been, I venture to think, not uninteresting. I was born in a suburb of Chicago in 1857 of poor but intellectual parents, who were able to get me a little schooling. Coming early under the influence of that remarkable man, Wilbur H. Comstock, I was spared many of the disillusions of boyhood and youth, and naturally gravitated to the ministry. I was the pastor of the Silas L. Younker Congregational Church at Chicago for some years until I received a call to visit China as a missionary. While there I became aware of the sanity and beauty of the Confucian creed, and after a long and agonised period of struggle I accepted it. It was then but a natural step to wish to spread this serene and satisfying message to all and sundry, and after a successful mission in my own country I am now preparing for an English campaign, assisted by my friend Washington Fig, who throws on the sheet scenes of Chinese calm and happiness.

It was because I had heard so much of your interest in the Truth, in whatever shape it may come, and your influence in the more brainy and advanced section of London society, that I felt I must at any cost endeavour to gain your sympathy. My introduction to the best English intellect would, I am certain, be assured if I might be permitted to hold my first meeting in your drawing-room.

I shall give myself the honour of waiting upon you to-morrow afternoon at 4.30 p.m.

Believe me, dear Madam
Yours in the Truth
GREELEY BOK

LYNN HARBERTON TO MISS ADELAIDE FIELDING, 17 VICARAGE GATE, KENSINGTON

THE MANOR HOUSE
WINFIELD

DEAR FRIEND,

I wonder if you could help me. But of course you can, because to help is your *métier*. Well, this is what I want. I want to find a position in London for my ward Edith. My own literary need of her is over, and I am not likely to have more just yet as I have no present work and am going away. Meanwhile Edith ought to live in London for a while, if it is only to hear Beethoven and to see how much wiser Winfield really is. But as she cannot afford to do so either in pocket or character as an idle person, she must have some work found for her. So I turn naturally to you. What do you suggest? You know what she has been doing for me. I hate to break habits, as you know, and this closing of a joint task of some years is a sad business; but is there anything that is not transitory—except your kindness? That goes on for ever.

This reminds me that though I don't often have presents, one of the squire's little girls, Joan, who has rather appropriated me as a lay uncle, gave me something on my birthday last week which made me think of you. It is a copy of an illuminated page of a fifteenth-century book,—framed, to stand about on one's desk or wherever it will catch the selfish eye,—and the text runs :—

I shall pass through this world but once: any good thing therefore that I can do, or any kindness that I can show to any human being, let me not defer it, or neglect it, for I shall not pass this way again.

There is no doubt that it was a fitting enough reminder for me, for I neglect and defer all the time. While I am wondering whether a kindness is really kind or not, the opportunity goes. But you have no doubts.

Something that happened yesterday I think might amuse you. I went to call on one of our old villagers, a tenant of mine, who is chair-ridden but otherwise all right. I noticed at once that he was brighter than usual—I should say, less lethargic. He sat more erect, extended his hand with a freer gesture for his ounce of tobacco, and where for many months now he has languidly agreed with me as to the weather, or at most recorded rather weakly a differing opinion, he contradicted me outright. It was not so cold as yesterday, he affirmed, when I remarked that it was colder: not so cold—and this in quite a firm voice. I read him a few paragraphs

from the paper, listened to his comments, fished a little for his news, but had to come away no wiser as to the cause of this improvement in spirits—I might also say, this access of pride. In the street I met the doctor. "So old Dickson's gone," he said; "eighty-six." "Has he?" I replied; "I hadn't heard." "Yes; early this morning." I walked on, thinking about Dickson. And suddenly I understood my old friend's reinvigoration. It was a case of promotion. He had taken Dickson's place; he had become the oldest inhabitant.

Yours always
L. H.

MISS FIELDING TO LYNN HARBERTON

17 VICARAGE GATE
KENSINGTON

DEAR LYNN,

I am not convinced that you are doing the wisest thing. If I know anything about you at all I know that you will be unhappy directly you stop working. You must have something to do: work is your safety valve. There are men who can be idle cheerfully and without doing any one or themselves any harm; but you are not like that. And what is more, it will be worse for you to be idle without your ward, who has probably become very necessary to

you, as women always have to be to selfish men (and I have no reason to suppose that you are any less selfish than any one else).

This being the case I wish that before you decide to send her here to fend for herself, you would consider the possibility of coming too, taking rooms near the Museum, say, and doing some work there for a while. Edith can still help you and be in London at the same time.

You make a mistake in thinking that London is necessary for her in any way whatever. She is quite as ready for life's crises as ever she will be. Girls are. It is men who want to be taught and broken in. And when you talk of her beginning to lead her own life you make me laugh—as if any woman who is helping a man is not leading her own life. What other life have we? What else can we do? Is not that our fate? If I personally am not engaged in it, it is only because of my father's folly in leaving me too much money and my own folly in being too particular about the man I was to help. But I know perfectly well, however degrading the thought may be, that that is the true destiny of the sex, and I for one, though I may affect indignation, do not quarrel with it. Beethoven indeed! Beethoven is only embroidery, although it masquerades as the real stuff of life only too often in this idle city. But she won't hear much Beethoven just now, all the same, for he is out of date. Even Tchaikowsky is a little out of date too. We all have to

talk Richard Strauss to-day—Domestic Symphonies with realistic tone reproductions of babies sucking their bottles. I wonder how your bearish Doctor would have defined a Domestic Symphony!

Tell me what you think about my suggestion. If it is impossible (and I may not, of course, know all the facts), I can, I am sure, find Edith something at once.

Your friend
ADELAIDE FIELDING

I wish you would send me a photograph of yourself. I feel that the one I have, taken when we were all at Cromer in 1894, can no longer be representative. Are you still clean-shaven? I hope so. Do you still set your face like a rock against the blandishments of fashion? Of course you do. It is quite useless to tell me that you never go to a photographer. That excuse is dead and buried. Photographers come to us now. I am as certain that Edith has a camera as that I have not. Slip a snapshot of Edith in too, that I may know her before I meet her.

FROM THE "WITFORD HERALD"

WINFIELD CORRESPONDENCE

Mr. James Death, who was thrown from his cart last market day, on leaving the Pelham Arms, and sustained three broken ribs, is doing well.

. . . . . .

Great regret is experienced in the village at the intended departure of Mr. Harberton of the Manor House, who is leaving on a prolonged visit to his brother and sister at Algiers. Mr. Harberton has endeared himself to all by his courtesy and kindliness, and Winfield will not be the same until he returns. Mr. Harberton has just completed his edition of Boswell's immortal biography of the Great Lexicographer, rare Ben Jonson, a task of which Winfield may well be proud. Hitherto our only local author has been Miss Nelly Turle, the gifted poetess, so many of whose effusions may be read in the churchyard; but Mr. Harberton henceforward will bear away the bell. In all warmth and sincerity we say to him, in the words of the old Greek poet, "Vale! Vale!"

. . . . . .

LYNN HARBERTON TO MISS FIELDING

THE MANOR HOUSE
WINFIELD

MY DEAR FRIEND,

It cannot be. I want Edith to go to London, and to go alone. I am leaving almost directly on a longish visit to my brother and sister at Algiers. But even if I had not this determination I could not contemplate a stay of any time in London. London affects me disastrously. I have no spirits, no re-

bound, after two days of it—even in May. And London also dislikes me, or at least misunderstands me. I am too low-spoken and slow for it. I have to say everything twice or even three times. Waiters disregard me ; shopkeepers consider me insignificant ; Post-office clerks serve others first. London oppresses me, robs me of individuality : in the phrase of a friend of mine, makes me "so damned anonymous." I don't say I mind that, but I do resent being just one of a white-faced hurrying crowd. One feels it instantly on setting foot on St. Pancras platform.

Now and then there is compensation—in seeing others suffer too. The last time, for example, I came to town, our squire travelled with me. The squire is a big man here, of course, and when he drives down the street there is a punctilious touching of hats, and many of the younger and timider folk—those that are not hardened to the world—experience something of a tremor, a spasm of awe. I will not say that at first, before I knew him, I was myself completely free from some such emotion : just as I still feel a desire to cry when I see a Royal personage driving by in state.

Well, when the squire and I travelled to town together on the occasion I am recalling, our station-master himself opened the carriage door, obsequious porters made an avenue for him to pass through (a short one, it is true, for we have only two porters), and the guard did all the cap-touching that is good

for a man on a bright spring morning. Meanwhile I was left to carry my bag myself.

But at St. Pancras the balance was adjusted, for the squire was a nonentity there, merely an elderly, not very well dressed man, obviously from the country, and the porters shouted "By your leave!" and a newspaper boy cannoned into him, and when he left me and was climbing into his cab he looked as much like every one else as if he were no squire at all: or rather, he looked like a provincial up for the day, which is worse. But down here, as I say, he is a monarch, an emperor. It is not perhaps to be wondered at that he and I leave home so seldom.

For you must not think that at Winfield I am not a swell too. It is only when I am with the squire that I am disregarded. We can all of us be a swell to some one, if we really want to; but I am a swell without wanting it. You see I have a certain number of pensioners here, and though my voice is low, and I have no horse or motor car, and I prefer a back door to a front one, and in this world one is taken at one's own valuation, yet all the same I am considered a swell far too much. It is a great nuisance, for it prevents real intercourse.

Just to take a small case.—There live near us two beautifully-brought-up little girls in white aprons and clean print frocks, to whom I always want to say something pleasant. But I can't, because whenever they see me coming they stand quite still in

the middle of the lane until I am within range, and then they curtsey. It is a very simple curtsey, a bend of the white stockings with a hand at each side of the print frock—a perfectly simple curtsey, without any affectation—and yet it leaves me mute and uncomfortable. Not quite mute perhaps, for I murmur "Good morning," or possibly "Thank you" (I don't really know what I say); but certainly uncomfortable and ashamed. I have a feeling that when one receives the homage of a curtsey, one ought to make a fitting reply, a sweep of the hat, a bow, "Your servant, ma'am." But if I did anything of the kind these nice little girls would be far more uncomfortable than I am; and more, they would have an unpleasant feeling that I—who wish them nothing but good things and merriment—was making fun of their politeness. So there is nothing for it but to grow inured and look condescending and superior (which is what they expect and want), and realise that really good intimate terms are not destined to subsist between big houses and little ones. Punctilio blocks the way.

I wonder if it is at all understood that the poor are far more the enemies of socialism than the rich; or how should I put it to include myself?—the uneducated are more the enemies of socialism than the educated. For I suppose I am educated. At least I can say "De mortuis——" tactfully and "Verb. sap." on the right occasions.

If I were not afraid of hurting their mother's feel-

mgs, I would ask her, as far as I was concerned, to tell her daughters to omit the curtsey. I cannot feel worth it. "Honour where honour is due" is a good maxim, and no honour is due to me from those nice little sisters. The important thing is to teach country children to honour and respect old age. The way that old people are treated by some village children suggests that reverence for age is a purely artificial growth, the primitive idea being contempt and abuse and perhaps compulsory euthanasia. There are some boys here who climb a tree that hangs over a footpath near us, and, keeping silent as birds, spit on the wayfarers beneath. (I can understand the attraction: perhaps I can remember it!) Their special victim is a very aged neighbour of ours —one of my pensioners in fact. Although an octogenarian, she is full of vigour and activity and has also not a little dignity, which makes the conduct of these boys the more unnatural; for usually boys persecute only those who by making the mistake of being feeble or stupid may be said, in our civilisation, to invite it. A village boy's eye for frailty and lack of dignity is fiendishly accurate. But I fancy the old lady has given her case away by wearing a very wide-brimmed black straw hat, which lends her a mushroom appearance. Any kind of unconventional garment is an almost irresistible invitation to the cruel side of a little boy's character.

I never meant to write so much but my pen ran away. Also I am happier for it—and by your own

showing, for it is tantamount to a little of the desired and necessary "work." But if I go on writing like this you will begin to be sorry I ever asked you to do anything. Please tell me what you have in store for Edith, because I am impatient for her to begin. Once I really make up my mind I am in a fret till I act.

Yours always

L. H

MISS FIELDING TO LYNN HARBERTON

17 VICARAGE GATE
KENSINGTON

DEAR LYNN,

Very well. I have already found the very thing for your Edith: to be a mixture of friend, companion and secretary to my sister Mrs. Pink, who, although seventy-three, is still convinced that she can do the world some good by holding drawing-room meetings, and distributing Rationalist tracts, and feeding and clothing agnostic prophets; and therefore wants some one to hold her pen. She lectures me in words a yard long which were not invented when I was at school, and I pray for her, and we are both the better for our own efforts; so it is all right. But she is the dearest woman I know, and she is ready for Edith whenever she wants to come; and you need not worry about the salary being too low or the work too heavy, because all her servants ever since the beginning have died of in-

activity and swollen Post-office-savings-books. Nor need you fear that Edith's orthodoxy (if she is so eccentric as to have any) will be disturbed, for my sister's Voltaires, when all is said, are very circumspect dove-like creatures, although she is too simple and sweet to suspect it. So that is settled.

You were a good boy to send the photographs: I expected a great outburst of mock modesty. I like your new face even better than the old, and am delighted to see that you still abjure the moustache and beard. It would have been terrible had you had a pointed beard: I suppose you have noticed that men with pointed beards are always conceited and self-protective? But why have you gone grey over the temple? With your untroubled life! And with such a secretary! My dear Lynn, she is beautiful. I had no idea she was like that. I was thinking rather of the serene intellectual type—Girton and Ruskin, spectacles even, everything except charm. And she is delightful, with quite a little mischief even in this tiny picture. How you can trust her to London I can't think. But you were always a problem.

My dear friend, you will be bored to death after a week of Algiers. Why don't you arrange to return quickly and throw yourself into a more active life? I suppose I might as well suggest football as politics, but there are other interests that can take one out of oneself. What you need to do is to forget Lynn Harberton for a while. Write a play and attend the

rehearsals: I should guess that that is as complete a change as a country recluse can need. Have you no parish councils? If I were an autocrat I should make a law preventing introspective moody men from possessing private incomes. You should all have spades and pickaxes instead, which reminds me that you ought to take up gardening. That is your best corrective. Stay at home and garden, whatever Edith may do.

You will write to me now and then, won't you? And I will tell you what I think of Edith.

Your friend

ADELAIDE FIELDING

P.S. If Edith does not care for the work at my sister's Unsettlement (as I call it), I wish she would stay with us here while she is looking about. We are between Kensington Palace on the one side and Church Street on the other—the only street I have ever known in which postillions are still to be seen all day long. I should like to have her here, if only to see how she does her hair like that. I love it over the ears with the little Leonardo hint.

MISS FASE TO EDITH GRAHAM

THE LAURELS
GRANGE-OVER-SANDS

MY DEAR EDITH,

I am very glad to hear that you are leaving Winfield for a while. As you know, I never ap-

proved of your being so much with Mr. Harberton. In my opinion he is too young to want an amanuensis. When I was a girl there was no talk of amanuenses, but people who wanted to write books wrote them and said no more about it. I remember our dear old doctor, of whom you have probably heard your dear father tell—after he retired he wrote a book, and a very good one too, on the probability of those odd mounds outside the village, which turned out to be a disused Fencible camp, being the graves of ancient Britons, and he never wanted an amanuensis or the constant company of a young girl. But the world grows different every day.

It is not that I do not approve of Mr. Harberton, who for all I know is a very nice man and was chosen by your dear father to be your guardian, although your dear father, clever man as he was and the best gentleman gardener in Yorkshire, as every one said, especially with sweet peas, was not always a good judge of men; but I do not like the new way of girls being on such terms of intimacy with single men, or indeed any men except their husbands, and I am not sure that I quite like the way in which some husbands and wives now behave in public, as if they were schoolfellows rather than what they are to each other. I like to see a wife leaning on her husband's arm.

You must be very careful in London. I have never been there, but I am told by Mr. Lark and other friends here that it is a city of draughts and

dangerous crossings. The best preventive of a cold I have always found to be camphor-balls, if taken in time, or later, ammoniated quinine. My neighbour Mrs. Forty-Smith has been taking salicin with good results, but one must be careful with new drugs. I hope there are good chemists in London. I have every confidence in our Mr. Pember here. Poor man, he has lately had a great misfortune, having been robbed by his errand boy to the extent of more than two pounds. It is not so much the loss of money, he said to me when I was in last, either on Wednesday or Thursday, on Wednesday I think, but the loss of trust in human nature. He had done so much for this particular boy, taking him from a bad home and treating him almost as one of the family. Life is very difficult.

If I am to catch the night's post I must stop now.

Your loving

AUNT CHARLOTTE

P.S. I have just asked Ellen and she says it *was* on Wednesday that I went to Mr. Pember's. So I was right after all.

LYNN HARBERTON TO MISS FIELDING

THE MANOR HOUSE
WINFIELD

DEAR MISS FIELDING,

No gardening, I think. I sometimes wonder indeed whether I really want flowers at all; whether

the pleasure which they bring is not lost in the thought of their transitoriness and, through them, the transitoriness of all things and the terrible swift foot of time. The daffodils begin the lesson: one day they are not, the next they are, and again they are faded on their stalks; then tulips; then lupins and delphiniums; then sweet peas; then lilies; then hollyhocks; and so forth, through the year, all so slow to come, then coming so eagerly, and dying just as certainly afterwards. I hate to be reminded of the passage of time, and in a garden of flowers one can never escape from it. It is one of the charms of a garden of grass and evergreens, that there for a while one is allowed to hug the illusion that time tarries. If old Job here (a sanctimonious rascal) were not my master, and if I were not naturally so given to the line of least resistance, I should have only grass and evergreens; but I cannot.

Of one thing I am certain, and that is that if ever I do move to another house it shall be a house with a shrubbery, a real dark shrubbery.

No one who has not a shrubbery really knows what the evening song of the blackbird and thrush can be—especially, I think, the blackbird. The perfect conditions are, perhaps, April, six o'clock, a shower's last drops just pattering, and the sky yellow in the west. Arnold's "wet, bird-haunted, English lawn" must have had a shrubbery on the edge of it. Yet no one seems to strive after the shrubbery any longer. One reason for its neglect is, I imagine, that

the good shrubbery does not come to perfection in the lifetime of its planter, or at any rate not until he is full of years ; and we are more selfish than we used to be—more inclined for rapid results. Planting a green shade in which one's grandchildren may have green thoughts is a pastime that has to a large extent gone out. Hence it is that houses with good shrubberies must be old ; and to-day most houses that one sees are new. The shrubbery belongs to the days of Miss Austen. In one of her books—I forget which—the impossibility of taking a house without a shrubbery is insisted on. A house with a good shrubbery is always a house old enough for Miss Austen's characters to have lived in it ; which is another point in its favour.

Here is another long letter all about anything but Edith.

Yours
L. H.

MISS EILEEN SOMERSCALES (AN OLD SCHOOL-FELLOW) TO EDITH GRAHAM

13 The Crescent
Bath

Dear Edith,

Your news is very interesting, and as usual you are having good luck. To go to London is the one thing I have always wanted, but mother of course will not hear of it, and has even renewed the lease of this house for another twenty-one years at

the very moment when we might have got free and taken things into our own hands. She has also given up the Library subscription, because she says that the set of Edna Lyall which Uncle Fred has sent her will last for a year, by which time one of our West-country newspapers is sure to have a cheap circulating library of its own. This is very hard on me, but mother does not think of that. I shall be glad to have your London address if you care to continue to correspond with one of us poor benighted provincials.

Yours ever
EILEEN

EILEEN SOMERSCALES TO EDITH GRAHAM

13 THE CRESCENT
BATH

MY DEAR EDITH,

I am afraid I wrote you rather a cross letter yesterday, but I had one of my bad headaches and things were looking rather black. Of course I am glad you are going to London and I do so hope you will be happy there.

Yours ever
EILEEN

MORE ADVICE FOR LYNN

MISS FIELDING TO LYNN HARBERTON

17 VICARAGE GATE
KENSINGTON

DEAR LYNN,

Wait but another minute before deciding: for I have another idea for you. You have always grumbled about your house and your gardener and the irksomeness of some of your neighbours. Very well then—take this opportunity of leaving Winfield. You are breaking your habits sufficiently by going away for six months; break them a little more by leaving altogether, and instead of moping at Algiers (which you will get to loathe, for there is nothing better calculated to irritate and embitter a fastidious man like you than the society of expatriated English people) spend your time in house-hunting; find a house; alter it to suit you; furnish it; and lay out the garden afresh. There is a perfect occupation.

Meanwhile Edith can be undergoing her ridiculous metropolitan noviciate, just as if you were fretting in Africa, or wherever Algiers is. That scheme is absurd for you if I know anything about you; nor do your brother and sister want you. You are the kind of relation that loves and is loved better by post and at a distance.

Your friend
ADELAIDE FIELDING

P.S. You are very eloquent about shrubberies, but they are grubby places. Give me beds and borders of flowers,—geraniums and lobelias and calceolarias even, those nice bright things that every one sneers at to-day but which always bring back my happiest years to me.

LYNN HARBERTON TO MISS FIELDING

THE MANOR HOUSE
WINFIELD

DEAR COUNSELLOR,

I would leave Winfield at once if I had any kind of notion where to live instead. But bad as my house is, I am used to it, and that is everything. If I were to go blind, which is not an impossible fate for one who has pored over so many books, I should never be lost here.

The only way to get a house wholly to one's mind is to build it,—and that means several horrible things, the first of which is newness, to say nothing of the difficulties of deciding on a plan, and, before the plan, of an architect. I think I have more terror of falling into the hands of an architect than of any other bondage. I am continually wondering how people who are going to build a house to live and die in ever come to a decision about an architect at all. It must be the hardest thing. I can understand the

choice of a site: one can choose a site absolutely and know that it is right. But the house? Why, within a week after the last of the builders' men had at last gone, you would see somewhere else the very thing you had been wanting all the while—the gables and chimneys, the quality of tile and brick, the arrangement of windows and doors. Only persons of great strength of mind or of very easy-going nature can decide without a qualm on an architect. I am sure I never could.

One of the odd things about architects—and this makes another difficulty—is that better ones are so constantly appearing. It seems as if only by postponing can one get the really satisfactory house. That friend of William Morris who built his house in an orchard without cutting down a tree—that is the kind of man one thinks one wants. Or on the other hand it is perhaps wiser to be utterly unmindful of beauty altogether, like Halliwell-Phillipps, the Shakespearian, whom I used to know slightly, who bought the side of a hill near Brighton and ordered enough galvanised iron buildings to form the nucleus of a habitation. After that, whenever he wanted to put up a friend, or increase his space for other reasons, he despatched a postcard ordering another room. Possibly the guest and the room would travel from town together, like a snail.

If only we had a climate, a caravan would be the solution. I knew a pair of lovers who vowed to spend their honeymoon in a caravan, and went so

far as to have one built. It was a caravan of such delicate splendour that were a sleeping gipsy to be transported into it he would awake believing himself in heaven, if gipsies have these pretty fancies. The cabin of a royal yacht could hardly be more sumptuously appointed. But the project broke down, the loving pair went to Como or another of the prescribed localities, and the caravan was idle.

The question then arose, what to do with it?—a question which always seems insistent with amateur caravan-owners. For a long time it reposed, with a plug in its distinguished chimney, in a field belonging to a friend, whose children, as a great treat, were allowed to play in it, but not (so cruelly unimaginative are those in authority) to cook at the stove. And then, when the winds and rains had stolen away its fresh youth, it was sold, as all amateur caravans eventually are, to a travelling photographer, who at once filled one of the windows with red glass. Perhaps photographers and gipsies are the only persons who can really solve the caravan problem. For after the question of winter-storing is settled there are the difficulties of the horse and shelter at night. To live in a caravan should probably remain one of the inaccessible ideals. It is better so.

And so the philosophic mind, vexed by the dangers attending any decision upon an architect, accepts Kingsley's maxim that the external beauty of one's own house matters nothing, since you are in it and cannot see it, the really important thing being to

have pleasant houses around you which you can see. In other words it is the mission of good architects to work entirely for our neighbours.

The same comment applies to pictures. A man rarely looks at his own pictures: he takes them for granted; but the first thing he does on entering a friend's house is to study his walls.

All the same, though I shall certainly never move unless the squire evicts me with a battering ram, I think there are few occupations more pleasant than to look over country houses as if one meant to take them; or to look over them with a house-hunting friend, as I did last week. We examined several within a twenty mile radius of this village. All were different, and, to me, impossible; but my friend chose them all in turn (it was the kind of day on which every country house seems perfect to a townsman, as he is), and it was delightful to watch him planning out the rooms and garden. These should be his own suite; here he would work; there he would put visitors; here should be roses and there sweetbriars and a lavender hedge. The lawn must be made a little larger, for golf-croquet; perhaps that tree might go. In one of the gardens was a ruined summer-house which he transformed instantly into a working room with an Italian loggia above it. My friend chose them all, I say, but he took none, and so we may have the agreeable task all over again in some other desirable quarter.

All the houses had spacious kitchen departments,

brick ovens as well as ranges, wash-houses, dairies and so forth, in the old-fashioned way. All had stabling too, and it was very good to move about on the cobbled stones amid the atmosphere of honest horses, after the petrolised highways which we had left outside. One returns to the past in an old house empty more thoroughly than in an old house occupied, however retrograde the occupants may be. In the old house occupied there will certainly be signs of the times—books, magazines, pictures; in the old house empty there are only the ghosts of ancient dwellers, and all is spacious and silent.

It occurred to me as we passed from room to room and debated their potentialities, what an interesting occupation for women of taste the advising upon decoration and adaptabilities of houses must be. Such work is rather out of Edith's line, or she would be just the woman for it. She could furnish her own house very comfortably, I am sure, but no one else's. Nor could I. My idea of furniture begins and ends with a fire, an armchair, book-shelves, a writing table, envelopes of all sizes up to a foot square, blue-black ink and matches.

No, I shall stay at the Manor House till I am carried out of it—"back to the land."

You are very good to be so much concerned about me and my plans, although you run so badly to pessimism. I really don't think it will hurt or irk

me to idle in Algiers a little ; and if I am bored, why I can write to you.

Yours
L. H.

P.S. But I don't want to go.

P.S. 2. You are horribly practical in what you say about shrubberies being dirty. So they are. But to avoid a shrubbery after a summer shower is to love one's clothes too much. Uncleanliness can be next to godliness too. A wet shrubbery smells like nothing else in the world. But I like your determined Victorian stand. Some one must have the courage of the past or we shall cease to be a nation altogether—with the Americanising and Continentalising that are now going on. Yet there are limits, I imagine, even to your fidelity : I doubt if you would care to see the revival of a frame of mind which could admire or see nothing absurd in such a poem as that which I copy here, or rather which I have got Edith to copy for me (that being my way). I came across it in a *Keepsake*, or *Casquet of Gems*, or *Friendship's Offering*, belonging to the wonderful eighteen-thirties, before any one had learned to laugh again. Dickens and Thackeray were just coming, to kill off Byronism ; but they were not yet. Here is the jewel : I am omitting one stanza—

THE FEMALE FRIEND

In this imperfect gloomy scene
Of complicated ill,
How rarely is a day serene,
The throbbing bosom still!
Will not a beauteous landscape bright,
Or music's soothing sound
Console the heart—afford delight—
And throw sweet peace around?
They may—but never comfort lend
Like an accomplished female friend

With such a friend the social hour
In sweetest pleasure glides:
There is in female charms a power
Which lastingly abides.
The fragrance of the blushing rose,—
Its tints, and splendid hue,—
Will, with the seasons, decompose
And pass, as flitting dew;
On firmer ties his joys depend
Who has a faithful female friend.

As orbs revolve, and years recede,
And seasons onward roll,
The fancy may on beauties feed
With discontented soul.
A thousand objects bright and fair
May for a moment shine,
Yet many a sigh, and many a tear
But mark their swift decline:
While lasting joys the man attend
Who has a polished female friend.

This poem, which I did not make up for you and which is genuine enough, is another proof that if we want to see the times reflected in literature we must

go to the second and third rate writers. The best writers contain all time,—they are in their own and of it, but not exclusively of it.

Good-night again

L. H

LYNN HARBERTON TO WORDSWORTH HARBERTON, HIS ELDER BROTHER, A MARTYR TO ASTHMA, WHO LIVES DURING THE WINTER MONTHS WITH HIS SISTER ANNIE IN THE VILLA DELACROIX AT ALGIERS

THE MANOR HOUSE
WINFIELD

DEAR WORDSWORTH,

I am all unsettled and have no plans except to have none. The last revise of the last proof has gone in, and the work of five years is finished. It is a great mistake to finish anything: the wise man would extenuate and extenuate even if he wrote only a sentence a day, rather than put "Finis" to his book. How long it will take me to collect enough energy and purpose to begin another task of the same magnitude—and only in a large and exacting task could I be happy—I cannot tell. For one thing, I am older now and fewer things seem worth while; for another, I do not see any man for whom I could work as I worked for the Doctor, who, no matter what Annie may say, was worth it.

Another circumstance that makes for restlessness is the loss of Edith. She had of course to go, my work being done; and indeed I should have had to open the cage anyway, for it was becoming a wicked thing and a complete betrayal of trust to hold her longer in this village; although when you come to essentials a village can offer as many as a city. But she is too young to be kept to essentials: she is entitled to a little vanity and embroidery. And of course she has her life to live as well as I—if mine can be called a life which is one long series of self-indulgence in the artificial luxury of literary composition, the evasion of everything at all troublesome that can be evaded, and the submersion of myself in the personality of a dead dogmatist (better though, Annie, than any living lion that ever I heard roar).

Edith is only twenty-five. She is not anti-social as I am; she has the quickest sympathies, so quick that I tremble for her in a selfish world; and it is only fair to her that she should see men other than myself—her Prospero and Caliban in one. Ferdinand may be washed ashore any day; but not here. The coast of Winfield is guiltless of any such flotsam. So she is going to London as the companion of an altruistic old Pagan lady of whom I know something and like everything (sister of my old correspondent Miss Fielding), and there she will have a chance of enlarging her horizon, and correcting her standards, and reducing my halo to the dimensions of a forage cap—if indeed it does not disappear altogether.

And so, Edith gone and no work to my hand here, I am going to do a desperate and unheard of thing: I am coming to see Annie and you. I shall probably start at once and come through France gradually and then take a boat at Marseilles. I will telegraph an address now and then.

Yours
LYNN

GWENDOLEN MARY FROME, ONLY DAUGHTER OF THE REV. AUGUSTUS FROME, RECTOR OF WINFIELD, TO HER BROTHER JOHN LINDSAY FROME OF MERTON COLLEGE, OXFORD, UNDERGRADUATE

THE RECTORY
WINFIELD

DEAR JACK,

This is just a short note to say that the rottenest thing has happened. Mr. Harberton is going away to stay with his brother and sister in some idiotic foreign place, and Edith is going to London to be companion to some one in Kensington, and what I'm going to do without her I don't know.

The usual ructions are in full swing here as I write, this week's butcher's bill being several thousand pounds too much, and New Zealand meat at that—or so the Rector says. I tried to soothe things a little by making a mild joke to the effect that the

more Canterbury lamb he ate the more fit he'd be to be Archbishop of the same place; but all I got for my pains was the request to leave the room while serious matters were being discussed between my parents, unless I could refrain from my deplorable habit of facetiousness.

But isn't it a bore about Edith? I don't know how long it's going to last. I'm going to take on all her old women while she's away, and that will be something to do anyway, even though it's no fun. But there's just nothing at all to look forward to, because she's quite the most frightfully decent sort I shall ever know, and now she's going.

Yours wretchedly

GWEN

JOHN LINDSAY FROME TO EDITH GRAHAM

MERTON COLLEGE
OXFORD

DEAR EDITH,

I am so awfully sick about your going to London that I don't know what to do. The only thing I can think of is that you will be near Queen's Club and able to see the match. You know I could never write a letter for nuts, and I don't suppose I ever shall, but I wanted to say that this London business seems to me the most awful tosh, and

Winfield will be just nothing at all without you. I don't suppose there is anything I can do for you, but if there is please tell me and I will do it.

I am

Your devoted friend

JACK FROME

P.S. I've just got an awfully ripping idea. Algy Damp, who is my particular chum here, has got a motor, and he often gets up to town for the day in it. It's against the rules, of course, but that's all the more fun. Well, my idea is that directly you are all settled I shall come up with him and then we can go out in the afternoon and have tea in one of those Bond Street places or perhaps take you for a ride round Richmond Park and back.

LYNN HARBERTON TO EDITH GRAHAM

HOTEL FOYOT
PARIS

MY DEAR CHILD,

I thought of staying here a while, but shall go on to Fontainebleau instead as the weather is so gorgeous. This morning, at lunch in the restaurant here, whom should I find but my half-brother, Herbert, just back from five years in the East. He goes to England immediately, and I am giving him a letter

to you. It is quite time you knew him. He and I, as you know, do not hit it off as well as we might: he is externally a little too destructive for me, and I am probably too undecided for him; but he is an unusual man and better company than most, whether you agree or disagree. He talks of settling down in England now, but of course will not—the go-fever burns too fiercely in his bones. How I envy him crossing the Channel, the right way, to-morrow.

Yours

L. H.

EDITH GRAHAM TO LYNN HARBERTON, POSTE RESTANTE, FONTAINEBLEAU

17A KENSINGTON SQUARE W.

DEAR GUARDIAN,

Here I am in London. The house, which is in Kensington Square, is one of the nicer kind of houses where people have lived before, with a flavour of your dear Miss Austen about it. My room looks over the garden. It is all very quiet, but only a few yards away there are 'buses and trains and cabs and enormous shops with odd names, and in half an hour I can be in the centre of the world, and in five minutes in Kensington Gardens, unless I am run over by a motor car on the way—which seems a very likely end for me after the safety of Winfield roads.

Mrs. Pink is a very charming old lady, but she is old only in years. Do you remember some lines you showed me which Lowell wrote about Mrs. Procter, beginning "I know a girl, she's eighty-two"? Well, Mrs. Pink is like that. One often thinks of old age with a feeling of dread, but if one could grow old like Mrs. Pink and her sister Miss Fielding, who looked in this morning for a few minutes, one would not mind how soon the white hairs came.

Mrs. Pink, although seventy-three, seems to be wholly dedicated to new movements. She looks with suspicion upon everything old, particularly the Church of England. Every Sunday she has a drawing-room meeting, at which a new philosopher unfolds a new religion. She seems to have a particular weakness for ex-priests. A large part of my duty will be to carry on the correspondence with these mystics, most of whom receive a fee for the meeting, and to send out cards and so forth. Miss Fielding laughs at all this, but the two sisters are very good-natured about their differences. Miss Fielding says she simply has not enough courage to call the Bible "interesting assorted literature," even if she wanted to: she would be afraid of being overheard above; and Mrs. Pink says "O, Addy, Addy, what has our intelligence been given us for?"

I think I shall be as happy here as I could be anywhere away from Winfield; but I miss you horribly whenever I am not busy.

I hope you will make a point of writing now and

again to Mrs. Ring while you are away. Picture postcards would do. Gwen, who is going to look after the cottagers, will probably keep me informed of how everything goes on. The person I am really most sorry for is poor Deuce. I rather think I shall try to get Jack to have him at Oxford.

I met the queerest little thing in the train coming here—a Miss Mitt, whose father has just died and who has therefore to earn her own living (like me —although she has not been turned out by a cruel guardian, as I have), and she has just got what promises to be a very good situation as a governess at Bedford. So we travelled together as far as that town, and she had one of my hard-boiled eggs, having brought nothing for herself except two small biscuits. She is going to write to me now and then, she says. I suppose you are too!

Yours
EDITH

MISS FASE TO EDITH GRAHAM

THE LAURELS
GRANGE-OVER-SANDS

MY DEAR EDITH,

What you tell me of your new home and occupations fills me with misgivings. I do not at all like your employer's interest in lecturers who know more than the Bible, especially Americans. Life

has difficulties enough as it is without adding to them. Even here in a little place like Grange we have great perplexities, and to add to everything else the best butcher in the town has just retired and sold his business to a firm with hundreds of branches who cannot give the individual attention that Mr. Radbone used to. We shall all feel it, but no one more than my poor Griselda, because her little pieces of raw meat every morning (you know that Blue Persians must have raw meat if they are to keep in good health, and even then they are delicate and lose their hair and are often ill through swallowing it) were so carefully looked out for her by Mrs. Radbone herself, a very nice woman, who will now I feel sure find the time hang very heavily on her hands. She talks of a small farm, and I hope she will keep her husband up to it, but his ambition seems to be to travel a little, and that I know will not suit her at all, she being very corpulent and shy.

I hope you will be very careful to go to church regularly in spite of Mrs. Pink. I understand there is a large church quite near Kensington Square, but Mr. Lark, who used to live in Highbury, has rather distressed me by saying that Kensington is quite a stronghold of Roman Catholics. I don't hold with giving advice, but you must feel your way very warily, my dear child, especially as you are I know fond of music, and these people are so cunning that they find out one's weaknesses at once. I gave up painting in water colours in 1881 entirely owing to

the interest which a young Roman Catholic lady professed to take in my progress in that accomplishment, but which was probably something much more serious, for they are always hoping to make converts, or perverts as I prefer to call them, to the Pope. Those of us who have any artistic sense are so much more precariously placed than the others.

I must stop now or I shall miss the post.

Your loving

AUNT CHARLOTTE

P.S. I am sending you a few eggs which I have no doubt your employer, who seems for all her mistaken laxity to be a humane woman, will allow you to ask the cook to boil. I think three and a quarter minutes the exact time, but servants are very careless and very often the water is not boiling when the egg is dropped in (sometimes so carelessly that it breaks and all its goodness escapes) or if it is, the egg puts it off. Mr. Lark tells me that there are no really fresh eggs in London, whatever the shopkeepers may say. Life can be very hard.

SIR HERBERT ROYCE TO LYNN HARBERTON

MORTON'S HOTEL
JERMYN STREET

DEAR LYNN,

I found your ward entertaining guests in her Kensington menagerie. Two or three American

prophets whose lucrative business it is to trim God to their own size eyeing each other like rival wrestling champions; a literary youth or two; and several tea-drinking women. Mrs. Pink is sound at bottom but too lenient to fools. It is amusing to see so old a woman so tenacious of revolt. I talked a little with her about it, but could get nothing but the phrase "People must be taught to think"; her idea being that everything non- or anti-scriptural is necessarily thoughtful. She is perhaps the oldest of that body of women in London at this moment who accept Bernard Shaw volubly and patronisingly without being in the least ready for him or really knowing what his game is. For it is all Shaw now in these circles, and it is chiefly women who fill his theatre, just as it is chiefly women who fill the churches. But women are always quick to get the machinery of modernity although underneath they remain as primal as Eve.

I have asked Miss Graham to dine with me and to go to a play. There is no chance of getting to know her at Mrs. Pink's.

I find London a good deal changed. New buildings everywhere and too many motor cars, and the foolish Londoners rather more foolish than of old. They take their various kinds of measles so thoroughly, the three varieties just now being Bridge, motoring and eating. The worst thing about games is that proficiency in them can be obtained only by the neglect of everything else; which means that gradually the brain ossifies in all other directions. That

is why really accomplished cricketers or billiard players, huntsmen or Bridge players, can seldom talk about anything else. The English seem to be unable as a people to have a place for everything and everything in its place.

Every one here is frivolous now. Scepticism and cynicism are in the air, with a kind of desperate high spirits and want of thought. They might all be characters in one of their own musical comedies. I notice it particularly, because when I was in England last, it was during the Boer war, and things were very gloomy. It was said that for every lieutenant who died in that heroic struggle twenty girls in English society went into mourning. But there is no mourning now. People seem to have given up dying. One gets an impression, among the smart lot, of perpetual sparkling motion. The rest however is drab and still enough.

I have taken rooms in a hotel in Jermyn Street, convenient to Rowland Ward, who is going to make a fine job of my skins.

Yours
H. R.

MISS MITT TO EDITH GRAHAM

c/o Mrs. Cunningham
Bellevue
Bedford

Dear Miss Graham,

I hope you reached London quite safely and did not feel the want of the egg you so kindly gave

me. There was no one to meet me and I had some difficulty in finding the house, but it is all right now and I am very happy here. It is rather an enclosed house, but my bedroom, which I share with the two children, has a window looking over the roofs to the top branches of a very beautiful tree, and I see this as I dress.

The children are quite nice, although rather noisy, and they wake up earlier than I should wish; but I think the happy voices of children make a very sweet music even when one would rather be sleeping, don't you? As they have no nurse just now, the old one having left and Mrs. Cunningham being anxious to see how we can manage without another, I have to help them dress, and look after them rather more than I was expecting from her letter; but I have always been fond of children, and I cannot in my first situation have too much experience, can I?

I am a little troubled about one thing, and that is the absence of a piano. It was distinctly understood that my music should be allowed to go on, but the old piano was sold quite recently, and as Mrs. Cunningham cannot make up her mind what make to try next, there is none. It means of course that Maggie's lessons cannot be given, but Mrs. Cunningham says that her head is so bad just now that perhaps this is as well. Perhaps I can find some one who has a piano on which I can practise on my evenings out, although just now, and until there is a nurse, I don't see much chance of having many,

as Maggie is so nervous that some one must sit by her bed while she goes to sleep. I should so prize a letter from you, dear Miss Graham.

Yours most truly

LYDIA MITT

EDITH GRAHAM TO MISS MITT

17A KENSINGTON SQUARE W.

DEAR MISS MITT,

Your letter made me unhappy because I am afraid you have fallen into rather a selfish house where they will take advantage of your good nature. You really must not stay for more than the first month unless Mrs. Cunningham gets a nurse and a piano and you have far more time to yourself. It makes me very unhappy to feel that while I am happily placed here you are being overworked. Do let me know that things are being made easier.

Yours sincerely

EDITH GRAHAM

EDITH GRAHAM TO JOHN LINDSAY FROME

17A KENSINGTON SQUARE W.

DEAR JACK,

It is very nice of you to be sorry about my leaving Winfield. I like to be missed. But I shall

be back before very long, as Mr. Harberton is certain to want me to help him again. This change is no more for me than one of your terms is for you,—except that *I* shall probably do some work.

Now I want to ask you a favour—Will you have Deuce? I can't leave him with Mrs. Ring because she will only overfeed him and he will have no exercise. As it is, she gives him tea, which is very wrong; and if he went to the Rectory he would have rather a bad time with the other dogs and make them very unhappy and jealous. So may I tell Mrs. Ring to send him to you? Then I shall know he is in good hands.

Yours sincerely
EDITH GRAHAM

JOHN LINDSAY FROME TO EDITH GRAHAM

MERTON COLLEGE
OXFORD

DEAR EDITH,

Of course I will have Deuce. But the rotten rules of this college won't let us keep dogs in our rooms, so he will have to be boarded out, but I shall take him for walks every day and I shall see that the people he is with are decent. That was rather a nasty one about my not working. I have made a resolution to work like ~~h~~, like anything this term, because you asked me to, and have hit on rather a

dodgy way of reminding myself I am going to. It is two cards, one stuck up on the looking-glass in my bedroom and one on the inside of the door in my other room, and on both of them I have printed the words WORK FIRST, PLAY AFTERWARDS. You see I see it whenever I shave or brush my hair, and whenever I am going out. So don't ever say any more that I'm a slacker.

I shall give Deuce a ripping time. You didn't say anything in your letter about that splendid idea of mine of coming to see you in Algy's car. I suppose you were too busy thinking about Deuce. Algy says that Kensington Square is just off the high road to Richmond. So it will be very easy for us to take you. The car is a fair snorter and we'll have you there and back before you can say knife.

Your devoted friend

JACK FROME

LYNN HARBERTON TO EDITH GRAHAM

BARBIZON

DEAR,

Some day we must go to Fontainebleau together—and in October, when it is brown and yellow and gold and full of the scent of the Fall and all the visitors have gone. It is splendid, but splendid in a way quite different from our English forests—Windsor, for example, or the New Forest.

The first thing that one misses is the grass. Our beautiful lawns in England have no counterpart here. I remember that the first time I saw the New Forest (I was ten) these lawns shocked me—they seemed to be against the rules. A forest as I understood it then was a dense mass of trees, gloomy, terrible, almost impenetrable, black. Probably Grimm and Andersen were at the bottom of this fancy. Open spaces of smooth sunny turf were unfair, I remember thinking: just as in my first experience of the underground railway in London I was pained to catch now and then glimpses of the sky.

I wish you were here, there is so much beauty to share. And yet it is better as it is.

I write this at a table under a chestnut tree in the garden of an odd little hotel, and every now and then a chestnut falls. So far nothing is broken, but the man at the next table to me has just had his soup splashed all over him. We will stay at Barbizon together, one day, you and I. Indeed we might even settle for a while, for Millet's house here is to let, and I nearly took it this morning. I think I could work there. Rousseau's house near by has become a little church: he left it so in his will. Diaz' house is almost opposite Millet's.

I remember walking in Wordsworth's garden at Rydal Mount on a perfect Sunday afternoon in April and remarking that if a man could not write poetry there he could not write it anywhere (which was, of

course, a very shallow thing to say). The same remark has more point here—in this wonderful light—as applied to painting. I never saw such light: we have nothing like it in England. Our light, compared with the light of Barbizon, is light under muslin, one might say.

I went early this morning to see the heads of Millet and Rousseau in bronze let into a rock close to the village. I wish rather that Corot's had been the other head, because Rousseau does not touch me as Corot does; but Corot belonged to Barbizon hardly at all—Ville d'Avray was his home—although his is the first name that springs to mind when the little white village is mentioned (the white now splashed with scarlet Virginia creeper). Corot, however, would be furious if he thought that any one had thought or suggested this—the simple generous creature, who said of himself and Rousseau, "Rousseau! Ah yes, he is an eagle, while I, I am only a lark who sings small sweet songs in a gray sky."

All day I have been thinking of this brave old bachelor, painting steadily all his life in spite of every kind of opposition at home and not much honour from those who ought to have known. There is no story of him that does not rejoice one, but best of all I like that which tells how he handed over to Daumier, another great artist, who had come on bad days and feared eviction, the title deeds of his house. I like too to think of him offering money to establish a battery against the Prussians at Ville d'Avray and

remarking to a friend who visited his studio during the war "That little picture will last as long as any work of Bismarck's—and it will have harmed no one." (I like to think it is the little view of the Seine at Saint Cloud, just below Ville d'Avray, which hangs in the study and every time we look at it lays a cool soft hand on our foreheads.) And no story has ever so infuriated me as that of a late English railway millionaire having so many Corots that he stacked scores of them with their faces to the wall in his attics, neither seeing them himself nor making it easy for others to see them. If ever there was an indictment of wealth it is there. But one must not get bitter in this air.

I hope you will see as much of Miss Fielding as you can. She is a very remarkable woman—one of the Victorian sibyls, clear-sighted, clear-spoken, humorous and very kind. Mrs. Pink amuses me a good deal with her devotion to new causes. Between this philanthropic old optimist and so shrewd a student of life as her sister you ought to do well. Don't let Herbert make you cynical; but that is impossible. And don't forget me.

Yours

L. H.

MISS MITT TO EDITH GRAHAM

c/o Mrs. Cunningham
Bellevue
Bedford

Dear Miss Graham,

How very kind of you to find time to write to me. Please don't think that I am unhappy—I am not at all. It is so splendid to be earning some money and being really independent, and although I am always very busy I don't think it ought to be called overwork. I am very strong, you know, and one is so much happier when one is busy. I confess I should rather have liked a room to myself, but we can't have everything, and I know of so many girls that are really much more in need of a situation than I was who cannot get anything for months; whereas I got this at once, without any trouble at all.

Just now it is a little difficult to get on with the children's lessons, because the cook left suddenly on Saturday, and as Mrs. Cunningham is not strong, and the housemaid cannot cook at all, I have been trying my hand. It is very lucky that I took a few lessons before I left home. I find I can do really rather well with simple things, and it makes me laugh sometimes to think what funny duties I am carrying out as a governess.

I am so glad to hear that you are happy. I don't think I ever loved any face so much as yours. I was looking at it for so long in the railway carriage

before you spoke, and I was hoping so much that something would happen to make it possible for you to speak to me. Do you know, dear Miss Graham, I was even rather naughty, for I was trying to think of some way of attracting your notice as if it was an accident, but I could think only of dropping my book, and I did not like to do that because you might have rather a tender toe and it would have been so dreadful if I had hurt it.

I have been writing this in my room, but there is now no more candle to see by, so I must stop.

Yours very truly
LYDIA MITT

EILEEN SOMERSCALES TO EDITH GRAHAM

13 THE CRESCENT
BATH

DEAR EDITH,

You will be interested to hear that Mr. Lenox proposed to-night, after the concert, where he sang "Twankydillo." Of course I have known for some time that this was coming, but I did not expect it just yet, least of all to-night, because I had been rather cross with him for choosing a country song like that, instead of something fine, but he said that there was too much classical music in the programme and the poorer part of the audience ought to have something more lively. I was so vexed that I re-

fused to play his accompaniment, and so the younger Miss Fleeter played it, and very badly too; and he actually made the audience join in the chorus, which I was glad to find they did only half-heartedly. However I let Mr. Lenox bring me home, and was really, I am afraid, rather short with him, but he took no notice, and suddenly stopped and said he had always loved me and admired me, and would I be his wife? And he looked so white and worn that I forgot all about "Twankydillo," and kissed his poor head as it it was a little child's, and said yes.

I have not told mother yet. In fact she was in bed when I got back. I am sitting up writing now, because to sleep is quite out of the question. Hercules is very kind, as you know, and he comes of a very old family. His grandmother was related to the Earl of Dacre. Of course I wish he wasn't a curate, but one can't have everything. Only you can do that. Do write me a letter saying you are very glad. I have so few friends.

You seem to have all you want, and nothing but pleasant flattering people round you. Mother gets more trying every day, but perhaps my engagement will make her happier. She will have to find a companion, I suppose.

Yours ever
EILEEN

P.S. Hercules, who is very odd in some ways, through having had a Quaker grandmother I suppose,

has a prejudice against engagement rings ; but I shall try to overcome that.

LYNN HARBERTON TO EDITH GRAHAM

FONTAINEBLEAU

DEAR CHILD,

I have had a ridiculous adventure. I walked out this morning from Fontainebleau to a village eight or nine miles away called Fleury-en-Bière where there is a desolate château which I wanted to see. The only way in seemed to be through a farmyard, and this I took, and had got half-way across, towards the desired gateway, when I was stopped by a foe—an angry turkey. There is probably a short way with angry turkeys, but I have not learned it. I know more or less what to do if a bull were to run at me, or a dog try to bite me ; but a bird is different. There are no laws for dealing with assailing birds. It is said that a swan if aroused to attack a man can break his arm with one blow of its wing, but I never heard of any prescribed line of conduct for the man. Similarly with a turkey. A turkey cannot do such damage as that, but what is one to do but retreat lamely and in shame when a turkey pursues you closely across a large farmyard totally lacking cover, and now and then threatens to bite or peck ?

No one came to the rescue. Had any one come, I learned afterwards, I should never have been able to see the château. Slowly and painfully, waving my stick, but horrified at the idea of feeling it hit the bird, with terror breaking out damply all over me, I reached an open doorway and slid through it. The turkey came too. Beyond I saw a high gate. I backed to it and stood by it, holding the turkey with a fixed glare. It stopped. I glared harder and felt for the lower bar of the gate with my foot. The turkey retreated a step, and I rose a step. It retreated another, and I rose another, and then I turned to scramble over. The turkey made no attempt to follow, and I was within the courtyard of the château.

Everything was deserted and desolate. The great house fills, or almost fills, one end of the court, while stables and other offices and an imposing gateway complete the square. All is in red brick, rather ornately finished, and all is crumbling. The château itself is surrounded by a moat, now dry and filled with rank greenery, and to get into the house I had to go round to the front and cross a bridge. In front of the house stretches a park, equally empty and forlorn, with a lake in the hollow.

Inside the state of things is not so bad. The wainscotting is good, the windows keep their glass. The kitchens are immense, with elaborate wash-houses and larders and cellars all contiguous. Upstairs one walked more cautiously, for it seemed that every door must give on an ancient French family

at tambour work or cards. There were, however, only mice and vacancy. It was all very strange and a little eerie; the sense of emptiness and dead owners was too vivid.

The next thing was to get away, the trespass done, and to get away without meeting the turkey. It seemed as if the great gateway of the courtyard which led to the road direct would be the best way, but it turned out to be locked. None of the other buildings contained a door that led anywhere, and in the end there was nothing for it but to run the blockade through the turkey's domain, the farmyard, —as it were, the Dardanelles. Very gingerly I descended from the gate and entered the doorway of the farm. I glanced hastily round. The turkey was on the other side, among a crowd of servile poultry, probably telling them of his late conquest over man; but immediately in front of me, apparently awaiting my appearance with the liveliest interest, was a new enemy, a stout farmer's wife talking to a chauffeur; and then I learned that the owner of the estate had just arrived in his motor car, and had seen me from the park moving before the windows, and had sent his chauffeur to demand who I was. It cost five francs to pacify the woman, and two, the man. I fancy I came out in the report as an eccentric American artist.

Good-night

L.

MISS FIELDING TO LYNN HARBERTON

17 VICARAGE GATE
KENSINGTON

DEAR EXILE,

Your ward has come and conquered. My sister Victoria, who used to be thought of as a strong-minded independent woman, already gives signs of abdication. To me, who belong to the past, even if I never fluttered and trembled and twittered quite as much as was the rule, there is something almost uncanny in this new, level-eyed, quick, self-possessed, resolute, silent type of young woman who gets most of the things she wants.

But Edith is not quite like that, because she is diffident and sympathetic too. Also she does not smoke, and that is getting to be one of the shortest cuts to my diminishing and obsolete heart. I think that if there is any occasion on which smoking would be justified in a woman it is when she gives a cook notice. I feel that if one could then light a pipe and do the deed coolly between the puffs, it would be the perfect way—unless of course it could be managed by telephone. But otherwise I dislike intensely to see them emitting clouds like so many clubmen.

But of course women are clubmen to-day. There is a large building in Piccadilly where, I am told, they swagger about for all the world like the real thing. Why don't you give up ornamental literature

and write some trenchant pamphlets to tell England a few truths—not the least among them that there will never be any hope for the country so long as its girls try to be boys and its women men and work is considered shameful? Your musty old Doctor Johnson would have let them know it. I have no great opinion of the modern young man, but I have less of the modern young woman, with her slang, and her Bridge, and her hockey, and her cigarettes.

Nature has arranged that there is only one thing for a woman to do, and that is to be a mother. Everything else she does is just an evasion. I used to deny this, and even now it is against my wish to believe it; but I do believe it. I believe that every unmarried woman is a ridiculous or pathetic figure; I believe that every childless woman is a tragic figure; and both are outstaying their welcome in Nature's house—are there only on sufferance. Women no doubt can do useful social things—speak, agitate, organise, and so forth; but it is all beside the mark. Their duty is to be mothers. How Nature and the gods must laugh or weep at our frivolous efforts to lose sight of this destiny. My sister's proselytising zeal for example.

I am beginning to want to see two things again—a lady and a mother. One mother, it is true, I can see at any time, by just sending for my niece, Mrs. Hyde, who is sweet and merry motherhood personified; but there are no more accessible ladies. Women in any number, girls, good fellows, "exquisitely

gowned hostesses," but ladies have gone out. Or are they all serving at Jay's?

Of course we are very glad that you have no need of Edith for the present, because we want her here, but if I had been in your place I should have invented a new book instantly in order to retain her company—even if it had been another work on Nelson. One of the nicest things about her is her silent intelligence. No one could ever call her "brainy," which is I think the worst of the new words. In my poor sister's drawing-room they are at present bending under "mentality," but that monster never wanders my way. I represent the old guard, and keep Tennyson on the drawing-room table.

Good-bye for the present. My advice to you is to cut short your visit to your brother and come back and be human and obvious. Foreign lands are no place for a man who is dissatisfied with himself and perplexed as to his duty. All travel for pleasure is expensive and unnecessary, but it is never so foolish as when a sore head is your only companion. You should give up being cleverer than other people: it is a great mistake. There is a cry just now about going back to the land. That is what you ought to do, using "land" in its fullest sense.

This is the last time that I shall bore you with my advice, so don't fear I am becoming a revivalist.

Your friend

ADELAIDE FIELDING

P.S. Edith's orthodoxy is all right. She has not yet begun to say her prayers in bed; and that is the intermediate stage between simple faith and infidelity. If she is snapped up by some vain London gentleman you will have no reason to complain, for it will be largely through her five years' apprenticeship as a listener to your gifted tongue. It is no use training listeners in the country and sending them to this capital of male selfishness, if you are going to grumble when you lose them. I have watched her with male talkers. Her ear is more powerful than many tongues.

MRS. PINK TO CYNTHIA HYDE, OF THE CORNER HOUSE, LEATHERHEAD, WIFE OF HERBERT CHISHOLM HYDE, OF THE WOODS AND FORESTS DEPARTMENT, MRS. PINK'S NEPHEW

17A KENSINGTON SQUARE W.

DEAR CYNTHIA,

I want you to come and tell me what you think of Adelaide's nominee, Miss Graham. I have my own opinion, which I will keep until I hear yours. The mother died young and left her, an only child, to the care of her father, a country vicar. He seems to have died when Edith was about nineteen, after appointing a literary friend, a Mr. Harberton, who knows all about Dr. Johnson, as her guardian. For the past few years she has lodged in the village and has helped Mr. Harberton as an

amanuensis. It was because his book was done, and because he thought she ought to see more of life, that she came to me. I like her immensely; no, love her. (How silly of me! I never meant to say that, but I hate crossing things out and even more I hate writing things over again. But when you come, don't let my opinion affect yours.)

A most extraordinary man has just come to London, an American, who after being for several years a Congregational minister in Chicago gave up everything to become a missionary in China, but while there was himself converted to Confucianism. He is now trying to win others to this most interesting philosophy, and I have arranged a meeting for him here on Sunday, the 23rd. I hope you will come up for the day. His name is Dr. Greeley Bok. (What a pity it is that one gets one's name so long before one's walk in life is decided.) I enclose two tickets for the meeting, but I suppose it is quite useless to expect Herbert to come too; so bring one of the more intelligent members of your suite instead.

Yours affectionate

AUNT VICTORIA

LYNN HARBERTON TO EDITH GRAHAM

FONTAINEBLEAU

DEAR CHILD,

I have had rather an interesting experience. I have met a giant. There is a fête in full swing

in this town of many soldiers, and in wandering through it I came suddenly upon a picture of a grenadier leaning against a lamp post and lighting his cigar at the flame. Underneath it were the words "The Tallest Private in the British Army." I paid my ten centimes and entered. Others entered too, and when there were enough of us the giant stoopingly emerged from the back compartment and unfolded himself to his ridiculous full height. His face was unmistakably English and as unmistakably the face of a very sick man—a large, dreary, pale, loose face. His red tunic was a world too big for him; he was a giant only in height—a dwarf could have knocked him down. On his head he wore a bearskin, to add to the military illusion; and he got his hand up to the salute laboriously, as though every muscle were stretched and limp. We walked erect under his outstretched arm, dropped coins in the tin box that he proffered with an importunate rattle, and the show was over,—for all except me. I could not let him go without a word, and he asked me to come inside where it was warm, and talk.

I followed him into the tiny compartment at the back of the tent. He sank wearily into a chair, threw away his bearskin, and sat there, a dejected monster, with the stove between his knees. He came from Lincolnshire, he said, and had never been in the British army. He shivered over the stove as he warmed his vast hands. We talked about

Lincolnshire a little, and then of himself; he said that his life was a hell, especially on the road; his employer allowed him to walk out only furtively, late at night and in lonely places, for a giant whose inches are his fortune must not be seen free. He was clearly in a late stage of consumption, as so many giants are in this decadent day, and he would not be sorry when the end came. After so many years in a circumscribed caravan and a low-pitched tent, the grave must appeal to him mainly as a place where limbs can be stretched without let.

We parted good friends, and I have since been back with a bottle and some English tobacco; but never has a gleam of life flitted across the bleak and snowy regions of his face. It will not, I fear, be for much longer that he gives the peasantry of France a false idea of the size of Mr. Thomas Atkins. Death has set his seal too unmistakably on his face. But what a life! He has not even enough spirit left to mind whether or not he sees Lincolnshire any more. He is as completely done as a man can be: a glaring example of the unwisdom of being abnormal in this trim world.

I have sent Mrs. Ring a postcard of Napoleon's bedroom, coloured. I hope it won't stir her to make any alterations in mine.

Good-night

L.

CYNTHIA HYDE TO MRS. PINK

THE CORNER HOUSE
LEATHERHEAD

MY DEAR AUNT,

I was sorry I had to run away this afternoon to catch my train, without saying good-bye. I don't like your new prophet at all. I don't like him, and I don't like what he said. I hope you will not encourage him to make a resort of Kensington Square; or if you do, I hope you will lock up the spoons. I am very glad Herbert did not come with me, as I am sure he would have been rude. Do take up Christian Science or something nice and quiet and refined. This great bull of a man revolts me, and I can't bear to think of Chinese religion. The Chinese have such horrible little eyes, one couldn't possibly share their faith. Besides they despise women, which is a shame, and worship their ancestors. You know perfectly well that I couldn't worship mine. Just think of worshipping that horrible man the Duke of Marlborough had to have shot for copying despatches. He was my great-great-grandfather, I believe. I think it is awful to encourage these unsettling Americans.

Your loving niece
CYNTHIA

SIR HERBERT ROYCE TO LYNN HARBERTON

MORTON'S HOTEL
JERMYN STREET

DEAR LYNN,

Edith interests me a good deal and amuses me too. What I like so much about her is her refusal to waste time—more than she must, I mean. By taking most things for granted, or accepting them quietly as if she did, she saves all the time that less sensible women, and men too, lose in surprise and resentment. Again, she never clucks. Most Londoners cluck all the time, over their neighbours' shortcomings or virtues: Edith takes them as they come. The temptation to say What a nice man so-and-so is! and What a dear woman Mrs. Blank is! to which most of us fall, seems to leave her untroubled. To her all men and women seem to be equally desirable, and she never analyses their merits. This might be called inhuman; but Edith is very human at heart, although the despair of those who want their own views of men and women to be shared absolutely by their friends. We all of us say that we take people as we find them: but Edith does it.

Yours
H. R.

NATURE'S CRUELTY

LYNN HARBERTON TO MISS ADELAIDE FIELDING

FONTAINEBLEAU

DEAR MENTOR,

You say something in your letter about the Back to the Land cry. It is a picturesque enough rally, but if you lived in the country and saw the lives which the labourers have to pass you would be less enthusiastic. One may deplore the steady drifting of the boys to the towns; but it is easily understood. To reproduce the father's drudgery over again cannot present any charm. In a town there is always a possibility of a lucky chance leading to prosperity: the books are full of meagre beginnings and illustrious endings—Carnegies and Wilson Barretts and John Burns'; but there is no future for the farm lad who sticks to the farm but a pound a week at the most and rheumatism.

Your friend Nature is so cruel. She insists that he who gives his services to the land shall be nothing short of a slave. He must be of the land and of the land only: he must think land and live land: and in reward the land will get into his bones and cripple him. I sometimes wonder if field work is a human being's work at all—when I see the gnarled and creeping things about here that are called old men and old women, who ought to be upright and happy, but are mournful and crooked and lacking both the opportunity and the power of enjoying the ameliorations of civilisation.

I hate machinery, but machinery would be better than this ; and yet of course it is machinery that has emptied the rural districts. Town life is bad enough, with its crowded slums and fiercer struggle for existence ; but there at least you get society and dry walls. You should see some of our cottages—such picturesque little bits for the artist !—on wet days.

And it is not only the labourers. I wonder at the employers too. I stood the other day on a hill at home, looking over the plain, while an old countryman pointed out the boundaries of the farms beneath us and told stories of present and past inhabitants of some of the cottages. His eighty-first birthday was only a month ago ; he has worked on the same farm for nearly sixty years, and he was born in the cottage in which he now lives. Eighty-one years is a long distance to send back a memory ; but his makes the journey with little difficulty. So we stood there, he and I, and picked out the dividing hedges and discussed farmers dead and living. God-fearing farmers—and otherwise ; gentle farmers—and otherwise ; sober farmers—and otherwise ; but mostly otherwise. "Wonderful hard drinking"—that was the burden of most of his recollections.

As he talked I seemed to be a part of the life he described, and to see inside those old houses at our feet. I was conscious of the drawing-room, with the horsehair sofas, the crocheted antimacassars, the bright green carpets, the tall lamp with flowers painted on it, the oleographs on the wall, the thick

tablecloth, the closed - from - Monday - to - Saturday smell; I was conscious of the little parlour with the black kettle on the hob, the pipes and tobacco jars on the mantelpiece, the gun hanging over it, the grocer's almanack with its bright picture, the thread-bareness of the carpet along the main routes of thoroughfare, the black ceiling, the smell of last night's smoke. . . .

And I seemed to understand so clearly why that wonderful hard drinking had set in. The isolated life, the meteorological reverses, one lot of crops soaked until they are sodden, another baked dry, hay ruined at the last minute, corn spoiled, cattle disease, sheep rot, valuable horses falling lame, and so forth. There is something so inexorable about the expenses of a farm. No matter how bad the harvest, no matter what wretched price the cattle and sheep have fetched in the market, there the expenses are just the same. Who can be surprised that farmers take to the bottle? These are trials that call for the fortitude of philosophers; and farmers are only farmers. A farmer who goes through adversity and comes out the other side still sweet, that is a man to take off one's hat to.

Think of an unsuccessful farmer on a wet day. Imagine an unsuccessful farmer, middle-aged, with no balance at his banker's, and all going wrong at home, and his illusions dead, and the future one stern frown, and the present a grey sheet of rain, falling, falling, pitilessly. Great Heavens! wasn't

alcohol invented for such a case? You know the German proverb about tobacco: "God first made man, and then He made woman; and then He felt sorry for man and made tobacco." Well, equally one might say He first made the land, and then He made the agriculturalist, and then He felt sorry for the agriculturalist and made wine. It was not until the Flood that Noah exceeded.

I write this in a hotel at Fontainebleau. I am very lonely. Good-night.

Yours
L. H.

AUNT

MISS FASE TO EDITH GRAHAM

The Laurels
Grange-over-Sands

My dear Edith,

I have wanted to write to you for some time on a very delicate subject, but have not been able to bring myself to begin. But now I feel I must delay no longer. I refer to the Heart. You are, dear, living in a great city full of young men, and sooner or later you will become an object of their admiration. Although I do not hold with giving advice, yet I hope you will be very careful. I do not say that you should be so careful that you should never marry at all. One can make grave mistakes in that way,

very great mistakes. But you must search your heart very narrowly before you say Yes to any one. The natural tendency of a nicely brought-up girl is always to say No, but of course, as she learns afterwards, when alas! it is too late, there are times when she really meant the opposite. My dear child, do not make this mistake. I have known lives made permanently sad through it.

It is said that marriages are made in heaven, but it is difficult to believe it of some. The Bank Manager here, such a nice man, a Mr. Crask, has the utmost unhappiness in his home life. I am sure there could not be a more gentlemanly official than he is, and it is a pleasure to ask for one's pass book, but no sooner does he get upstairs than his troubles begin. I am told that Mrs. Crask cannot forgive him for being only a clerk. She married him under the impression that he was a banker, and such is her nature that she persecutes him day and night for her mistake. I am told that he met her at Blackpool, where her mother kept a boarding-house; and though of course there is nothing in your case that corresponds to hers, I thought you ought to know about it.

On the other hand the senior curate here is one of the most happily married men you could conceive of, with a large family and a pony. His wife was the daughter of a rich farmer in Derbyshire, and they have the best cheese I ever tasted. She has a little private income and a perfectly placid disposition. But I wish she would buy better tea, for the Dorcas

meetings at her house are only half as pleasant as they should be. The taste for China tea is not common, most people seeming to prefer the rough Indian or Ceylon. At the last Dorcas meeting we began to read aloud Sir Frederick Treves' travel book, *The Other Side of the Lantern*—such a charming work. It would, I am sure, do your Mrs. Pink good.

I must now stop or I shall miss the post.

Your loving

AUNT CHARLOTTE

P.S. You will not, I am sure, misunderstand that remark about marriages being made in Heaven. Of course I believe that all things are made in Heaven, but some are for our chastisement and are too mysterious for us to comprehend, like Mrs. Crask's temper. Poor Mr. Crask once called on me, in the morning, on a question connected with my signature, and his manners were most refined and gentle. He bowed to me over a glass of sherry in a way that almost put me out of countenance.

EDITH GRAHAM TO LYNN HARBERTON

17A KENSINGTON SQUARE W.

DEAR GUARDIAN,

I am getting to know the family by degrees. Mrs. Pink's niece by marriage, a Mrs. Hyde, called

to-day with two of her many boys. I liked her instantly, and I hoped she liked me. She is abundant in every way: large and easy in body, and large and easy in mind. You I fancy would call her Shakespearian, and so should I if you had not come first and made it look like copying, which is detestable. I find that she has a reputation for saying deliciously frank and natural things, and even in the hour I was with her this morning I saw several spring to her eyes and lips and fall back again at a prompting of reserve. But I think I knew what they were. If she had known that I knew what they were she would have said them, but even Cynthias (her name is Cynthia) have to be careful before their aunts' new Companions. She is somewhere in the thirties, with a complexion like milk and roses.

The dear thing, Miss Fielding tells me, collects lovers as other people collect postage stamps or autographs, and if there are none about she invents them.

The two boys who came with her were Arthur and Dermot. Dermot asked me at once if I preferred Fry to Jackson. For the moment I thought he was referring to chocolate, but he went on quickly to add that they knew some one to whom Fry had given a bat, and that saved me from a fatal error. It also gave me a hint as to what I should say, and I chose Fry instantly. This made us friends for life; although of course Fry can't bowl and Jackson can. Arthur also is satisfied with me because I knew the

name of a moth which he was carrying in a match-box. So that is all right.

I have arranged about Deuce: Jack has him at Oxford.

Good-night

EDITH

LYNN HARBERTON TO EDITH GRAHAM

FONTAINEBLEAU

DEAR,

Just a scrap to-night. I do not say that Fontainebleau is the perfect place to walk in: it is a little too trim; but it is good enough for me. It is a very good place to be alone in, and just now I am glad to be alone. I have been bored horribly at the hotel this evening by two artists who could not think how I could care for solitary walking. I was moved to an unexpected pitch of argumentative eloquence. All in a moment I saw why I cared for solitary walking, and I told them so in one long, and, I don't doubt, rather noisy paragraph. I assumed the character of the contemplative vagabond, and, as near as I can remember now, said this: That the true vagabond is happiest alone. That there is absurdity in two men walking together; three—and the thing becomes grotesque. Hazlitt was right in deprecating conversation: the walker does not want to converse, except

with nature and himself. I doubt even if Hazlitt's exception in favour of a few words in anticipation of the supper at the inn was really sound ; for food that is articulately anticipated is rarely satisfying. Nothing, I said, so robs a *poulet* of its divinity as to expatiate on it in advance. Solitary, silent, sub-conscious anticipations of the meal are wiser. The cultivated vagabond will talk gladly with the denizens of the country, with bagmen, gipsies, circus-men, pedlars ; but almost the last thing he wishes to find at the inn is another like himself. There are a hundred reasons why he wishes to be alone : his sacred selfishness demands it ; he came out for it, otherwise he would have stayed in the city ; no one is quite worthy to commune with him, every true vagabond being superior to every one else ; he detests having his attention called to beautiful things, every true vagabond being the first detector and judge of beautiful things ; he does not want to agree, even less does he want to disagree, for every true vagabond knows best. And I concluded with this epigram : A companion is a mistake in many ways, but chiefly because when he is with you you are not alone. Then I said good-night and came up to write to you and go to bed.

Good-night

L

LISTENER'S LURE

EILEEN SOMERSCALES TO EDITH GRAHAM

13 The Crescent
Bath

Dear Edith,

Your long letter about the Sunday afternoon concert was very interesting. I had no idea that anything but sacred music was allowed. How very fortunate you are! You seem just to open your mouth for pleasant things to drop in, while I am tied to this wretched dull invalids' town, and almost to the house.

As for Sundays, I am afraid I must say good-bye to them now and for ever. Hercules makes such a point of my going to the evening service as well as the morning, and he rather wants me to come for him after school in the afternoon to walk home. I have always felt that the one day in the week on which engaged people in our class need not walk out together is Sunday; but Hercules does not seem to trouble about things like that. I never knew any one so completely careless about what other people are thinking.

I thought our engagement would make mother happier, but when we are alone she grumbles more than ever. Hercules is the only person who can keep her happy, but of course he cannot be here very much.

Yours ever
Eileen

EDITH GRAHAM TO LYNN HARBERTON

17A KENSINGTON SQUARE W.

DEAR GUARDIAN,

I think you will like to know what my duties are. Here is a typical day.—I get up at eight and we have breakfast at nine. After breakfast Mrs. Pink reads her letters and we answer them. There are always a great many, and we are usually about an hour or two over it. Among them are pretty sure to be one or two asking for money, and these Mrs. Pink likes to examine before she does anything.

There is a funny little man, Mr. Conran, who calls every morning at half-past ten for orders, just like the butcher, whose sole duty it is to make inquiries about the begging-letter writers. It is awful the number that are not genuine. Mr. Conran is a very kind little man, whose face gets sadder and sadder as he finds out another and another impostor. Mrs. Pink discovered him in an A.B.C. where he was sitting next her one day when she was in a hurry and offered her his cup of coffee and roll, saying he could wait as he had time to spare. She liked his face so much that they talked a little, and she gave him her card and asked him to call. And the next thing he was getting thirty shillings a week as her almoner and detective. His real business is that of legal engrosser, which leaves him plenty of time. He is a widower

with no children, and he lives in one room in Gray's Inn.

Soon after eleven Mrs. Pink goes out, and she likes me to go too. We have lunch at one, and after that until half-past four, when tea is brought in, I am free, because Mrs. Pink either reads or goes to Committee meetings. She never pays calls, and no one now expects her to, but there are few days on which callers do not come here, and I am kept busy talking and pouring out tea until six every afternoon.

Most of the callers talk fads, but we have some interesting ones too, and three or four young men, the nicest of whom is Mr. Albourne, a protégé of Mrs. Pink's. He is different from all the other young men I have so far met. One of the pleasantest things about him is his frank way of criticising himself. He stands on one side, as it were, and sees himself file by, and calls out impudent things to the procession. London is full of laughers, I find, but he is the first to realise the truth that the best laugher begins at home. He is on one of the weekly reviews, but he does a good deal of work for other papers too —little anonymous satirical articles and sometimes verse.

Mrs. Pink, who knew his parents, offered to pay for him to go either to Oxford or Cambridge, but he said he would prefer two years in London, with means to do nothing all the while, and she consented. I think he was right. He has never published any of his verse, but we have several of his poems (which

he will not allow us to call poems) pasted into a little book. I am copying two of them, representing two of his principal moods, for you to read. You will see that in one he believes in human nature's sweetness and in the other he mocks at one of its weaknesses: he is always swinging between these two phases of mind—reverencing simplicity and genuineness and mocking pretentiousness and affectation. He is very delicate, a little inclined to be consumptive I am afraid, and is probably the worst dressed man, without being untidy, in the world (worse than you). These are the poems:—

THE DIVINE IN THE COMMONPLACE

At the moment that Fate had set apart
For their meeting, they met; and from heart to heart
A bond of sympathy straightway grew,
And one they became, who till then were two.

Had you asked his friends to tell you aught
Of the kind of fellow the girl had "caught,"—
One would have called him "an honest soul,"
Another, "a very good sort on the whole,'
And all would assure you the man had naught
Of hidden depths, and they couldn't conceive
("But you can't account for a woman's whim!")
Whatever the girl could see in him.

Her friends would have answered much the same
Of the girl henceforward to bear his name:
"A plain, little, inoffensive thing,
Lucky to win a wedding ring;
Pleasant enough, but tame as tame;"
And try as they might they couldn't perceive
("But a man's such a gullible character!")
Whatever her husband could see in her.

Such would have been the wise world's speech;–
While love transfigured each for each,
And she was his soul's mysterious star,
And he her wonderful Avatar.

This is the other :—

THE HIGHER ALTRUISM

The conduct of myself is—what?
A bagatelle, a trifle, not
A matter for persistent care,
But something which, when I can spare
A minute, may, perhaps be scanned
With profit. On the other hand,
The conduct of my friends, my neighbours,
Demands my best, untiring labours.

My ways, alas! are fixed, were fixed
When God first took the trowel and mixed
The mud of which he fashioned man.
A part of the predestined plan,
Fate ties my hands; I cannot move
Except in the appointed groove.
To grumble argues little wit;
I see my weird and bow to it.

But none the less can I descry
My neighbour's faults with half an eye.
His little weaknesses I see,
And recommend the remedy,
And strive by every means to raise
My neighbour into wiser ways.
Nay, more, with other folk I run
His foibles over, one by one,
Till all believe each limitation
And pine for his regeneration.

So pure a joy is self-negation.

We have dinner at half-past seven, and after dinner, if no one is here, I read to Mrs. Pink. We have just finished *Diana of the Crossways* and are going to begin *One of Our Conquerors* again. I say again, because we tried it before *Diana*, and the first chapter was fatal. So this time I am going to paraphrase the first chapter and begin with the second. Mrs. Pink's favourite poem seems to be "The Eloping Angels" by William Watson. I don't think you have read this; but if you had you would at once realise her revolutionary turn of mind. It is very wonderful in any one so old, I think. Miss Fielding, her sister, is greatly amused by it all, and never omits to ask me just before she goes how my orthodoxy is getting on. She pretends to see my bump of reverence diminishing day by day.

We go to bed at half-past ten; or at least Mrs. Pink does. I sit up an hour or so longer and write to you or read. So you see it is a quiet and regular life. I am as happy, I think, as I could be away from Winfield. The only times when I feel really miserable are when the fogs come. Kensington Square seems to be peculiarly adapted to hold fogs. They seem to treat it as a resting-place, to lie down in and gain fresh strength.

One thing that shocks me and rather frightens me too is the way that London gossips. In the country we get into the way of thinking that London is in earnest: that it seriously discusses statesmanship and art, literature and sociology, religion and

music. But it is all a mistake. London only discusses people. However the conversations may begin, even in this strenuous house, they end, in spite of Mrs. Pink, in gossip about men and women, chiefly women.

I like Sir Herbert Royce more and more, but it is not easy to keep pace with him. He is very destructive. I suppose killing lions and tigers makes men feel superior, and that leads to contemptuousness. I wish he had not killed any, it seems to me so dreadful to do anything to spoil such beautiful pieces of life and strength: so unfair too to do it with a gun. He says he quite agrees with me, but to kill is second nature with him, and as it is against the law to kill men in England, he has to kill big game in Africa and India. If I thought he meant it when he talks like this I should be very unhappy, but it is only his humour, I am sure. For all his cold talk he is much more thoughtfully kind than any of the other men that come here.

Good-night

EDITH

P.S. I don't mean that he is kinder than Mr. Albourne, but more satisfactorily so. Mr. Albourne gives one the impression that he could be kind even to his own hurt; but Sir Herbert would always be strong too.

GWENDOLEN FROME TO EDITH GRAHAM

THE RECTORY
WINFIELD

DEAR OLD THING,

I am afraid I am making the most awful mess of your work here. For one thing the old women don't like me so much as they liked you, of course; and then there is the drawback that I am the Rector's daughter, which makes me a sort of policeman and puts them rather on their guard. "I do 'ope Miss Edith is coming back soon," they say most of the time.

Mrs. Beloe is the worst. She really is a terror, I can't do anything right for her. I took her some beef-tea the other morning and heated it on the fire and gave it to her. "Thank you, miss," she said, "but Miss Edith never puts pepper in because she knows that I can't take it, it makes me cough that dreadful." Well, she didn't cough and she mopped up the whole cupful, but I stood there just feeling a rotten failure.

Mrs. Tootell has had a most awful tooth, and I took her to old Weedon's on Thursday, the day that the dentist comes, to have it out. All the way there and all the way back she was whimpering, "Miss Edith would have given me something to cure it, Miss Edith would. She wouldn't let the brutes pull

it out"—although the tooth was quite hollow and breaking away. The dentist was very gentle and quick, but she thinks and speaks of him still only as "the brutes."

Father says it is very wrong of Mr. Harberton to allow these old people enough to stay on in their cottages when they are not earning anything. He says the cottages are wanted for younger people, and the old ones are bound to need more and more attention which they cannot pay for, and they ought to go on the parish. I suppose there is something in it, but I quite agree with you about their horror of going to the workhouse and the importance of sticking to their own roofs as long as they can. Of course what Winfield wants is some almshouses. They would not mind going into them, and if they were endowed like those at Rambourne everything would be made easy for the old things.

A letter from Jack says he's working like a nigger: but I bet that's all tommy rot. I know Jack better. When I told father he said "The negro, my child, is the laziest and most procrastinating creature on God's earth." Jack also says that Deuce has been biting one of the sillier Dons' leg, and every one is delighted. Do write to me.

Yours ever

GWEN

THE ALMSHOUSE SOLUTION

EDITH GRAHAM TO GWENDOLEN FROME

(Fragment)

17A KENSINGTON SQUARE, W.

It is very good of you to look after my old charges. They are rather a grumbling set I know, but it isn't much fun to be old like that and full of rheumatism. I am always surprised that they grumble so little, not so much. But it isn't their grumbling to me that I mind, it's their grumbling to Mr. Harberton. He is always so weak and they know just how to get round him. They tell him he looks overworked. I believe that clever women always tell men they look overworked. You are quite right about the almshouses—that would be splendid. It is the only form of charity about which one feels quite happy, and it can be beautiful too if you get a good architect. But I suppose they cost a tremendous lot.

Always yours

EDITH

DENNIS ALBOURNE TO EDITH GRAHAM

8 HARE COURT
THE TEMPLE

DEAR MISS GRAHAM,

I have received a circular inviting me to join an American Success Club. A Success Club is a

very clever idea, thoroughly American, and I want Mrs. Pink to know about it. It seems to me a little too much in her line, but don't say I said so. The process is very simple, as these passages cut from the circular will show you.

Perhaps you are ambitious and eager to make an effort to win success, but lack confidence in your ability, or do not know just how to commence. You perhaps feel that you possess natural talent and ability, and if you only had some one to encourage and direct you in the right channel of thought, you could take up your work with renewed energy and increased hope and make a success of it. This is where a membership in this Club would help you, for it would supply the missing link between you and success, through the assisting influence of the Mentalism of every member. You would at once become a link with the other members, in the chain that moves the machinery of success. Their combined mental strength would be united with yours and before such a mighty force all obstacles would give way. . . .

Thoughts are things, and Mentalism is the subtle force by which thoughts are intelligently conveyed from one to another. The concentrating and centralising of this great force by thousands of minds, upon a special subject at a certain hour, always creates the condition desired. . . .

Each member of the Club is instructed in the use of the Law of Mentalism, so that he may by its use create for himself and for others the elements of success. While every man and woman possessing a knowledge of this law can assist himself or herself to success, still they can have that assistance increased a thousandfold, if they are also in harmony with, and receive the mental help and influence from a thousand people who are already attaining success. Then if that number is increased to ten thousand, the success will be increased in a corresponding ratio. The mental vibrations of one member are strengthened by those of all the members of the club. Every member will use his mental Force to help you, and you in return will send out your mental vibrations to unite with theirs and help them.

As they become more successful, your success will increase, for you will all become as one great mind and think with one accord.

Isn't that clever? The inventor of such a notion ought to be on *The Times*; perhaps he is. I am offered, for a dollar, two months' concentrated American mentalism on any affair I may have in hand. As my affairs are all literary I am not accepting, or in the result I might find myself writing like Matthew Arnold's friend the Reverend E. P. Roe or even Lew Wallace—the most successful American authors, I believe. But it has given me an idea. What do you think of an English Failure Club? The Failures will combine to think steadily of the new book or play upon which one of those successful men who cannot make a mistake is at present engaged; and by our concentrated mentalism get merit—and unpopularity—into it. Terms free.

Yours sincerely

D. A.

LYNN HARBERTON TO EDITH GRAHAM

HÔTEL DU SOLEIL
AVIGNON

DEAR,

I have been to another fair, or rather I found myself suddenly surrounded by fair at this place and

surrendered to it. It was the usual thing save for two incidents which perhaps are worth describing to you. One was the demeanour of a young woman who confessed to the possession of three legs, and indeed was unmistakably the owner of that number on the picture outside, each one as robust and identifiable a leg as those wooden models on which hosiers display lace stockings, or as the legendary Manxman's. Having set myself the task of evading no single booth, I went in and was immensely taken with the calm self-possession and modesty with which the Phenomenon displayed her draped treasures. It was no small achievement under a fire of sceptical criticism by a dozen caustic wits. She was rather pretty, and quite young, and there she sat, without the faintest tinge of emotion, until they began to show signs of exhaustion. Then "Merci, messieurs!" she said very sweetly, and dropped the curtain, and we filed out. After all, when one has three legs and can make money by the gift one can afford to be tolerant. But it is odd and rather hard when the wrong person blushes, and that person oneself. I felt somehow as if I had been peeping over some one's shoulder to read a private letter and had been caught doing it.

The other incident was connected with a roundabout. My vow of thoroughness did not include riding on a revolving pig or rabbit, but I looked with a good deal of amusement at those that did. The correct thing is for an observer to provide himself

with long rolls of coloured paper and to throw these over the young woman he likes best as she whirls by. Every girl on this roundabout had an admirer, and several of them were covered with votive streamers ; every girl except one, a little plump solid thing of about seventeen, wearing deep mourning, who could win no notice whatever. Round she went and round, and each time was still uncomplimented and more visibly mortified at such a public confession of failure. And so what do you think I did? I bought some rolls of paper and very deftly got two over her shoulders just before the ride was over. A sight for some of our neighbours, Mrs. Clayton-Bush for example: Mr. Lynn Harberton, the Winfield recluse and editor of Boswell, among the grisettes! Before she could dismount I had disappeared into the crowd and so escaped whatever sequel such advances may have.

Good-night

L.

GWENDOLEN FROME TO EDITH GRAHAM

THE RECTORY
WINFIELD

DEAR OLD EDITH,

We go on missing you awfully. Why ever did you go away? The place is absurd without either you or Mr. Harberton, and his garden is a

perfect disgrace. Father does what he can to make Job work, but, as you know, the old scamp wants continual looking after. The house is all right inside, except that it's empty, but Mrs. Ring has no power over Job, whose one mission in life, father says, is to exhaust our patience. The drive is full of weeds, and nothing is done that ought to be done. We don't know what to do, and it is really rather serious with such a ripping garden as Mr. Harberton's. Of course Job ought to be sacked, but then Mr. Harberton would never allow that. All he says when he is spoken to about it is "All in the Lord's good time," which is a terrific facer for father, who doesn't know what to reply. That's the worst of being a clergyman, they are always being had by the people who pretend to be religious. Don't you think you might write to Mr. Harberton about it?

Yours ever

GWEN

THE REV. WILBERFORCE PINK TO EDITH GRAHAM

c/o DR. KNACKFUSS
RAUHEIM, GERMANY

DEAR MISS GRAHAM,

You will be surprised to receive a letter in unfamiliar handwriting, but let me say at once that I am only partially a stranger to you, having heard of you from my poor wife Mrs. Pink, whose unhappy

life you are, I trust, to be enabled to lighten and rectify. The state of my own health, as you have probably by this time heard, makes it imperative for me to live out of England, in resorts whither Mrs. Pink refuses to accompany me—on the fantastic plea that she has work to do in the great city and no time in which to study her physical well-being. The world undoubtedly grows madder every day, for never before, I am convinced, can a lady have preferred the mischievous task of unsettling the minds of others (which is in its nakedness the upshot of my deluded wife's philanderings with agnosticism), to accompanying her husband on his painful but necessary search for bodily ease.

I appeal to you, Miss Graham, whom I have conceived of as a very sensible Christian woman, to do everything in your power to restore health to Mrs. Pink's mind. You will oblige me by seeing that a copy of the Scriptures is always placed in her room, however often she may repulse it, and I should be happier in mind if I had your assurance that she was reducing her customary amount of flesh food. At present I am living on a German mountain side in a single garment of flannel, barefooted and bareheaded in all weathers, and eating only cheese and farinaceous dishes. When I am a little stronger I shall perhaps be able to return as near home as a Devonshire watering place, where it will, I trust, be possible for you to visit me by one of the day excursions in order that I may instruct you further con-

cerning my unhappy wife's spiritual and bodily regeneration. Meanwhile, believe me to be, in strict confidence,

Yours cordially
WILBERFORCE PINK

MRS. PINK TO THE REV. WILBERFORCE PINK

17A KENSINGTON SQUARE W.

DEAR WILBERFORCE,

Please do not worry Miss Graham with your anxiety about my welfare, spiritual or bodily. I am very well. Miss Graham is a very dear girl who has come to be companion to me, and me only, and I cannot have her troubled by details of your hypochondria.

V. P.

P.S. Miss Graham did not show me your letter or tell me of it; but I chanced to see the envelope on the breakfast table, and I know how history repeats itself.

LYNN HARBERTON TO EDITH GRAHAM

LE CHEVAL NOIR
NÎMES

MY DEAR CHILD,

I thought you would like to hear about a Course Provençale which I saw this Sunday afternoon in the old Roman arena here. A Course Provençale

is merely a muffled tame version of a bull fight, a bull fight with the buttons on, an Easter Monday review instead of a battle ; but if, as a man in this hotel who has seen scores of bull fights in Spain assures me, there is only one moment in the real thing—the entrance of the bull—one can taste that as well at a Course Provençale as at Madrid. I had that moment five times repeated. There are, however, bulls and bulls, and I can never believe that the minute and ingratiating cattle of the Provençal arena are worthy representatives of the noble beasts that too seldom destroy the *toreadors* of Spain. Nevertheless, though the bulls of Provence hardly exceed the stature of a Kerry cow, or the nurse in *Peter Pan*, we had our thrills now and then ; for, as it happens, a very small bull can make a very large bull-fighter run quite as fast as if a herd of buffalo snorted at his heels.

According to the bills ours was to be a *Grande Course Provençale avec le Concours de Pouly fils, Pouly père, et leur quadrille, qui travailleront cinq superbes taureaux.* The company was to consist of the Poulys —*Pouly fils, chef*, and *Pouly père, sous-chef*,—and of *L'Aiglon, sauteur à la perche, Clarion, banderillo, Saumur, saut périlleux*, and *Gras, sauteur attaqueur.* The performance, the bills also stated, was to begin at three o'clock precisely, and at half-past one Pouly *fils*, Pouly *père*, and their quadrille, accompanied by a band, were to make a triumphant progress through the town.

I had forgotten this part of the programme, and was therefore the more surprised, on turning a corner after lunch, to come upon two cabs full of bull-fighters, and a waggonette packed to the uttermost with instruments of brass and men blowing them. A bull-fighter in a cab is as bizarre a sight as you need look for, especially in Nîmes, for nothing in Nîmes is so shabby as a cab and nothing so splendid as a bull-fighter. There was also the contrast of size, the Nîmes cab being very small and the Nîmes bull-fighter very large,—an enormous fellow, dazzling in scarlet and purple and gold and intensely pink stockings: on this broiling Sunday afternoon a wanton addition to heat that was already almost insupportable.

The cabs were stationary before the Café du Sport, and the two Poulys and their companions leaned back in their seats and smoked lazily, gathering in homage with bold roving eyes. Young men pressed forward to shake the heroes by the hand; I saw one offer the burning end of his cigarette for L'Aiglon to take a light from, and, the offer being accepted, tremble beneath the honour. It was a great moment.

And yet there was one unhappy being in the huge crowd. Pouly *père* was unhappy, and I felt sorry for him. Pouly *père* wore the look of one who, after years with the key turned, and the chain up, and the bolts shot well home, and untroubled sleep, had heard the younger generation knocking at the door and had perforce opened to it. There was the

bitter fact on all the bills :—*Pouly fils, chef, Pouly père, sous-chef.* We who lead ordinary humdrum English lives, with never a bull from January to December, can have no idea what it must be for a hero of the arena (even the Provençal arena) to find himself growing old and ceding his triumphs to his son. Pouly *père* had been *travailling* bulls while his son was in the cradle. That warm Provençal applause, mingled with full-flavoured Provençal wit, had come to be part of his life, and now—*Pouly fils, chef, Pouly père, sous-chef!* It was probably at his father's ample knee that Pouly *fils* learned his picturesque profession. Paternal pride no doubt counts for something on the other side; but to be subordinate to one's own son—that must be hard! And Pouly *père* looked by no means past his prime; he was immense, with a neck that he might have appropriated from the most magnificent of his victims. His eye was bright; his admirers were many. But it was Pouly *fils* who rode in the first cab and whom the young men were jostling each other to shake by the hand.

After a slight difficulty, based on a misunderstanding of heroic status, concerning the payment for the refreshment of one of the lesser heroes—a hero just on the debatable line between the condition of sometimes paying for oneself and the condition of always being paid for—the procession moved away, to the accompaniment of a too familiar air by Bizet; and the crowd melted into the arena.

I wandered into the arena too ; a crumbling relic of the Roman occupation of the Midi, yet, though crumbling, good for hundreds of years still ; a beautiful example of the accuracy of the Roman mason's art, with the huge stones, cut to the nicest angles, laid one upon the other without mortar. That was the way to build ; the Latin races always understood the art, and understand it still.

By degrees the western half of the arena filled, fathers and mothers and little children in the better seats, and elsewhere soldiers, idlers, and boys. The sun blazed on the white stone of the Roman masons ; the sky was intensely blue ; the boys whistled the eternal *Carmen*. At three o'clock a bugle sounded, the eastern doors were flung open, and, again to the strains of the Toreador's song, in marched the brave men. Although they were merely playing at danger, and their adversaries were so trifling and their affectations so absurd, they impressed me strangely. They carried it off, you see, having no self-consciousness, none of that terror of appearing ridiculous which freezes an Englishman. I assure you that when those six glittering figures marched in, with their brilliant cloaks on their shoulders and careless Southern insolence in their mien, I found myself thrilling to a new emotion. Really it was rather splendid.

Right across the arena they came, while the people clamoured and cheered. Then pausing before the daïs, they bowed, and flung their cloaks with a fine

abandon to fortunate occupants of the front seats, who (with pride also) spread them over the railing: all except Pouly *fils*—he flung his to the bugler on the daïs. There was a brief lull while they provided themselves with pale pink cloths and took up their places here and there in the arena. The bugle sounded again. The moment was coming.

The spectators stiffened a little (I was conscious of it) all round the building, as a smaller gate at the far end was thrown open. We waited nearly a minute, and then in trotted (trotted!) a blunt-nosed little bull with wide horns and a wandering, inquiring, even ingratiating, eye. If it had only rushed in or paused at the threshold with an air of arrogance its size would have been a matter apart; but to trot in and to be no bigger than a St. Bernard! The pity of it! It was as though one had seen with one's own eyes the mountain bring forth the mouse.

Pouly *père*, however, was above such regrets. One course and one only lies open to that simple mind when a bull enters an arena; he has to perform a particular feat of his own, of which his son shall never deprive him. No sooner was the bull well in the midst than Pouly *père* prepared for his achievement. He seized a long pole, striped like a barber's, and hurried to meet the bull. Not divining his odd intention, "Do they harry them with poles?" I asked myself. But no; Pouly *père's* purpose was more original, more pacific. Having shouted sufficiently to annoy and attract the bull, he awaited its

rush upon him, and then, as it reached him, grounded the pole, leaped lightly over its charging body, and fled to the barricade, a figure of delight and triumph. The spectators cheered to the full, and Pouly *père*, quivering with satisfaction, bowed to us all. He had performed his great feat; he had drawn first applause; he was not so old, so useless, after all.

The real business now began. One after the other the members of the *quadrille* waved cloths in the bull's face, and, running backwards as he charged, lured him right to the barricade, which they then vaulted, leaving him enraged and bewildered on the other side. If only the hint could be communicated to these little creatures that if they ran straight they would get the man! But waver they will, following always the divagations of the cloth; and therein lie the man's advantage and safety. The Course was like that all the time; furious but unsustained and impotent charges on the part of the bulls, and continual and sometimes quite unjustifiable leaps over the barrier on the part of the heroes. The irritation of the bulls was very trivial; they were not hurt at all, and little harm was done. The whole Humane Society might visit the spectacle *en bloc* and be untroubled by the discomfiture of the bull, although the impact of the entertainment on themselves might perhaps provide material for reflection. In the South, however, the effect of spectacles on the spectator is not a prominent subject for thought.

To return to the bulls' injuries — beyond two fugitive pricks as the *banderillas* entered their shoulders, and one more when the ribbon was momentarily fixed between them, they were not asked to suffer, except in dignity; and they made six fat men perform sufficient feats of activity to adjust the balance.

Pouly *fils* was by far the most capable of the company: his eye was steadier, his nerve stronger, he jumped the barricade as seldom as possible. Indeed, now and then, as he stood with firmly planted feet in the middle of the arena, avoiding the rushes of the bull merely by movements of his body, it was impossible not to admire him. I shall never forget his expression of triumphant content, and the proud controlling gesture with which he raised his left hand on the completion of each feat, the *artiste's* signal to the spectators to take him at his own valuation.

Pouly *fils* reserved to himself the right of all the most dramatic moments; but the pole-jump—that he left to his father. There were five bulls altogether, and Pouly *père* jumped over all. But I fear that a touch of ridicule (which possibly he did not perceive —I hope not—) crept into the applause as he descended to earth after his fifth flight. Yet a slight compensation came to him. At the end a little body of roughs laid hands on Pouly *fils* to carry him from the arena in what was intended to be a conquering march, but which, owing to defective handling, was merely uncomfortable for Pouly and grotesque to

every one else. Pouly *père*, stepping mincingly behind (compelled to a short step by the air from *Carmen*), watched his son's struggles with a saturnine expression which I seemed to understand. As one grows older it is the more easy to find oneself on the side of the fathers.

Good-night, dear child

L.

DENNIS ALBOURNE TO EDITH GRAHAM

8 Hare Court
The Temple

Dear Miss Graham,

I am sending you *Lavengro*, but you ought not to have worried because you had not read it. Everything in time. I used to be troubled about things like that, once; but never again. There is a certain kind of snob who is always throwing up his hands and clicking his tongue because one has not read this and that. Let him stew.

I had the other evening to fly to the rescue of an honest man who had become a target through making the confession that he had never read *Villette*. Had he been older in knowledge of the world he would probably have pretended that he had read it; but he was young and sincere, and he confessed to a total ignorance of Charlotte Brontë. A chorus of

astonishment and blame followed, beneath which he grew irritated. I had to reassure him by insisting that to be ashamed of not knowing a certain book is an emotion falsely based. As a matter of fact one is in a far better position than one's accusers, if the book is a good one: for whereas they have read it, you have the joy all before you.

I remember the laughter of superiority that rang out a few years ago when a certain critic wrote an article to draw attention to a charming essay he had just found in Dr. John Brown's *Horæ Subsecivæ*. He was then perhaps thirty-five, and Majorie Fleming, her poetry, her humour and her sweetness, had only just been revealed to him. But why should he have known her earlier? He knew a thousand books that his triumphant critics did not. I like these belated discoveries. They indicate that one is still young somewhere, since it is only the young that explore. A fairly well-known writer burst into my room the other day. "I say," he cried, "I've been reading a perfectly gorgeous thing. The Book of Job. Listen to this." And he began to read. This critic knew all about Stevenson and Omar Khayyám, and perhaps he only came to the Book of Job now because some enterprising publisher had issued it with sufficiently wide margins. But at once he had found it good—much better than he could perhaps have known had it ever been his task-work at school.

The joy of returning to a book and recognising the familiar landmarks as they rise up is a great joy too;

but it is not every one that can read a book more than once; and fewer can read it more than twice. I have an elderly friend who reads *Paradise Lost* every Christmas Day. Disraeli read *Pride and Prejudice* seventeen times. I have read Mr. Collins's letter and the visit to Rosings seventeen times, but not the whole novel.

Poetry, of course, one reads again and again. Indeed, one has to, for only thus can one really extract its honey. One is older every day, different every day (although by ever so little): hence one brings to each reading a slightly changed mind. He is a very poor reader who does not make a discovery every time he picks up a book of good poetry. I made one the other day. In my bedroom in a friend's house was an edition of Blake, and in it I found the "Auguries of Innocence." What a magnificent thing:—

> A Robin Redbreast in a cage
> Puts all Heaven in a rage;
> A dove-house filled with doves and pigeons
> Shudders hell through all its regions.
> A dog starved at his master's gate
> Predicts the ruin of the state;
> He who shall hurt the little wren
> Shall never be beloved by men.

I had known the opening couplet all my life, but I did not know (though I might have guessed) from what beautiful mind it sprang.

Tell me when you have finished *Lavengro* and you shall have *The Romany Rye*.

Yours sincerely

DENNIS ALBOURNE

MR. ORME RODWELL ARRIVES

EDITH GRAHAM TO LYNN HARBERTON

17A KENSINGTON SQUARE W

DEAR GUARDIAN,

I loved that story about the poor little thing on the roundabout. You were a dear.

One of Mrs. Pink's nephews has arrived. He is a literary man and has been living in Pisa for some months, writing a book on Giotto. He came to call yesterday afternoon, and stayed to dinner. Mrs. Pink left all the entertaining to me, being frankly out of tune with Mr. Rodwell (that's his name, Orme Rodwell), and also much engrossed by a new scheme for a typists' union which shall endeavour to keep the price of typing to a fair figure. Mr. Rodwell put his foot in it early in the evening by defending the practice of going to the cheapest market, no matter how cheap. It seems that his MS. of the Giotto book, which is very badly written, is being typed somewhere in Peckham at sevenpence a thousand words. When I tell you that Mrs. Pink's idea is to fix the rate at one-and-threepence, you will have a notion of her expression. Mr. Rodwell was quite cheerful about it. He had seen the advertisement in *The Athenæum*, he said, and it was not for him to suggest to the typist that she should ask more. It was then that Mrs. Pink relapsed into silence, and so I had the gifted creature to myself all the evening.

He stayed till eleven, and when I retired he was

making himself very comfortable near a syphon. I always tell Mrs. Pink either that her cigars are too good or that she should allow her guests only one each. But the dear old thing only laughs (as indeed she ought—I know I should be very unhappy if she made any change). Before I tore myself away Mr. Orme Rodwell had given me something more than the outline of his interesting career, from leaving Oxford to the present day, when he is ornamental and clubbable on four hundred a year, with the addition of what he can make by his beautiful gold-mounted fountain-pen. Need I add that he is not slender?

This morning came his *Preludes and Interludes*, with a neat inscription "To the Gracious Listener of Kensington Square, with the too Talkative Author's Penitence and Homage." "I felt sure that Orme would send you his little pipings," was Mrs. Pink's remark on seeing the parcel in the hall. Cynthia, who came in with her to lunch (as she always does and will when there is a packet for me in the hall), smiled her adorable mischievous smile. When she read the inscription on the fly-leaf she laughed. "O you Listeners," she said. "*I* never listened to Herbert, did I, aunt? Herbert had to listen to me. But the young men to-day have got to do all the talking themselves. In my time they had ears and a sense of inferiority: now they have tongues and temperaments." Then she offered me a pound of Instantanée if I could say truthfully that Mr. Rod-

well had not referred to his temperament once last night, and of course I lost it.

I forgot to tell you that Mrs. Pink is not a widow, as I had supposed. Her husband is a wealthy retired clergyman who enjoys the life of an invalid at various health-resorts. They agreed to differ some years ago, and both to go their own way. "Never marry a man who is fond of physic," is Mrs. Pink's solemn advice to me. "But better still, my dear, don't marry at all."

Yours
EDITH

SIR HERBERT ROYCE TO LYNN HARBERTON

MORTON'S HOTEL
JERMYN STREET

DEAR LYNN,

Don't worry about Rodwell. He will do no harm. He may fall in love, but it will not be with your ward but with himself-as-he-fancies-he-would-be-under-the-influence-of-what-he-conceives-to-be-a-passion-for-her. Do I make it clear? I know that kind. There is no chance of her loving him in return, I am convinced. If there were I might feel some concern, knowing that he would never go through with an engagement; but there is none. Rodwell is the ordinary snobbish self-protective University product of middle-class family, with a

weakness for the tables of the wealthy. Being a bachelor, he has taken thousands of people in to dinner, but none out. He is quite a type. I have dined at half a dozen houses and have met his kind at all, doing himself very well and passing correct but limited judgments on his betters. He would like the rose but has to be content only with its imitation; it is comic to see him pathetically panting after the correct thing. Too many of us spend our lives in this pursuit; but some of us have a few other interests too: Rodwell does nothing else. You need not, I repeat, worry about him. Edith is far too clear-sighted, and he far too fond of Orme Rodwell. She will not marry a tame cat.

No, the man who might cause Edith some unhappiness is a protégé of Mrs. Pink's named Albourne. He is far more dangerous, because he has imagination and a mind, and, what is much worse, ill health and therefore a touch of pathos. Directly a man who looks as if he did not know what to take for a cough or how to tie his necktie comes into contact with an unselfish girl, you have to look out. That is my experience. There is just that kind of helplessness and loneliness about this youth that so often does the mischief: a curious suggestion of a mystery too, which intrigues me a good deal. He is clever: writes rather discerning stuff; and knows where the best pictures and music may be found.

Women are so confoundedly disappointing. They will marry the wrong men: they do it quite as often

as men marry the wrong women. With all her good sense and discrimination Edith is quite capable of throwing herself away on Albourne. I suppose women have naturally no discrimination. They choose not from reason but tendency. They incline towards a man; and the mischief is done. Albourne is kind and thoughtful; but his steps are too short, his ambitions too parochial. Edith is a bit of a high stepper.

I suppose she is destined to marry some writing man: I see the crown of martyrdom hovering continually over her head. Well, she will probably kiss her rod, as is the splendid manner of women; but I am sorry. All literary husbands are polygamists: they have their real wives and their book wives too. That is why they are not satisfactory. When taking a holiday from pen and ink they may be so much more amusing or attractive or thoughtful than other men as to make it quite worth while to have married them; but the door of the Zenana is never locked and at any moment they may be in it again.

Yours

H. R

MRS. PINK TO CYNTHIA HYDE

17A KENSINGTON SQUARE W.

DEAR CYNTHIA,

I hope you will be able to come to dinner on Thursday as a most interesting man will be there—

an American who has come from New York with an introduction to me and to whom I hope to give a good start. He is exceedingly eloquent, and preaches a most beautiful and comforting doctrine raised in a serene atmosphere to a high level far above the clash of creeds. His name is Dr. Prescott Ings, and he was brought up to be a monk but escaped from the monastery and is now married to a wealthy Danish lady, a seeker after truth like himself.

Your affectionate

AUNT VICTORIA

DR. GREELEY BOK TO MRS. PINK

THE SHAKESPEARE PRIVATE HOTEL
BLOOMSBURY PLACE W.C.

MY DEAR MRS. PINK,

You have been so kind to me that I feel I must not avoid, even at the risk of being misunderstood, the performance of an act which may look like petty jealousy but which is really dictated solely by a sense of duty not unmixed with gratitude and affection. Briefly I wish not so much to warn you as to put you on your guard against Mr. (*not* Dr.) Prescott Ings, who has, I have learned, called on you with an introduction. If I were to tell you all I know, I could convince you in two minutes that

Mr. Ings (whose real name is Hennessy) is not a sincere seeker after truth, but an adventurer prepared to adopt any means likely to bring him notoriety and a following. I implore you to think again before you decide to give him the freedom of your drawing-room—that most coveted of honours. Apart altogether from the man's insincerity, there is the danger of his eloquence completely undoing any good that I, with my inferior gifts and possibly less superficially-attractive message, may have done; for if there is one thing more opposed than another to Confucianism it is the collection of odds and ends stolen from other men by Hennessy and called a creed.

You will I know read this letter in the spirit in which it was written. Believe me, dear Madam

Yours in all sincerity

GREELEY BOK

N.B. I feel that the time is rapidly growing ripe for a second discourse from me to the inquirers who patronised me by listening so attentively to my first. To strike the second blow as soon after the first as may be has always been my method. It is the second and third blows that tell.

G. B

EDITH GRAHAM TO HER WINFIELD LANDLADY MRS. TRIMBER

17A KENSINGTON SQUARE W.

MY DEAR MRS. TRIMBER,

I hope you and Mr. Trimber and Johnny are quite well. Will you do me a very great kindness? I want, for a friend of mine here who has a terrible cough, a bottle of your mother's famous remedy. Could you let me have it almost at once? I enclose a postal order for half a crown, the change out of which, when you have taken for the postage too, is for Johnny's money box.

I often wish I could see you. There is no bread in London like yours, and no such jam either.

Yours sincerely

EDITH GRAHAM

MRS. TRIMBER TO EDITH GRAHAM

CHURCH COTTAGE
WINFIELD

DEAR MISS EDITH,

I send the bottle at once, as we had one in the house against the winter. But I have sent to mother's for another and so you can have this. I am sending also some jam and a loaf of bread so that you may not forget the taste. I often say I wish Miss Edith would come back again, and my

husband he often says the same. Your room is always all ready for you, for I can't bear the thought of letting to any one else, and thank heaven we have no need to just now, with my husband earning such good money. Johnny sends you his respects and he has now one and ninepence halfpenny in his box.

I am yours respectfully

ELLEN TRIMBER

LYNN HARBERTON TO EDITH GRAHAM

(Telegram)

Address Poste Restante Palermo Write at once.

LYNN HARBERTON TO EDITH GRAHAM

HOTEL ROUGET DE LISLE
MARSEILLES

DEAR CHILD,

This will be my last letter for some little while, as I am crossing to Algiers, not by the regular passenger boat but by an English tramp with a berth to spare. I thought it would be more interesting and less formal. We shall put in at Palermo to unload some cargo, and stay there a day or so. I will post something to you at Palermo in a few days.

You seem to be horribly involved in the machinery of literature. No sooner do I detach myself from you, with all my cobwebs, than you fall among young writing lions in London. You must be very careful, for we are a selfish tribe, and, however we may begin, always lead the conversation back to ourselves. The sympathy of women is our life-blood, Edith.

I have much more to say, but have left myself no time to say it.

Yours

L.

P.S. I telegraphed to you to-day to write to Palermo. After that, address Villa Delacroix, Algiers

LYNN HARBERTON TO SIR HERBERT ROYCE

HOTEL ROUGET DE LISLE
MARSEILLES

DEAR HERBERT,

Your letter about Albourne disquieted me horribly. For Heaven's sake don't let Edith make a mistake like that. She must not marry a writing man, or if she does it must not be Albourne. The whole set at Mrs. Pink's seem to be incorrigibly literary. Your practical cosmopolitan mind ought to correct this influence.

I am going to Algiers slowly, in a cargo boat,

stopping at Palermo. If you have anything to tell me telegraph it to Poste Restante, Palermo: after that write to Wordsworth's for some time.

Great haste

L. H.

DENNIS ALBOURNE TO EDITH GRAHAM

8 Hare Court
The Temple

Dear Miss Graham,

You were an angel to send me that cough mixture. I am better already.

I have written another piece of verse—not lyrical (I guess my lyrical period, never very warm or rich, is over) but satirical.

> We all begin by being lyrical.
> Time passes, and we grow satirical.

—There's an impromptu statement of life.

It came about in this way. I read in a paper that a man in the Midlands boasts that he has shot no fewer than fifty-three kingfishers. Now this is just awful, Miss Graham. Have you ever seen a kingfisher, I wonder. You must be quick if you haven't, for soon there will be none left. It is the most exquisite sight. I saw my last as I was leaning over a bridge across the Rother, in Sussex: a flash

of burning blue. The flight of other birds may be more classically beautiful: a swift's, for instance, or gulls seen from a cliff, like Beachy Head, over a grey sea; or a flock of white pigeons against a thunder-cloud; or a hawk soaring. But the kingfisher is a jewel, the only jewel bird we have.

Well, I worked myself up into a state of fury, and there emerged this :—

HALCYON SPORT

Ere Progress yet to guns had led,
A man, to kill his prey,
Had need of qualities of head
That now have little play,
When any fool can pull a trigger
And shoot his tiger, bird, or nigger;

And more, in his benightedness,
When slaying called for wit,
A fowler slew no bird unless
Some stomach needed it:
Whatever flew and was not food
Might fly unharmed and raise its brood.

The world grew wiser, and at last
The double-barrel came,
And with it the iconoclast
Who kills in Learning's name,
And now alas! for whatsoe'er
Of feathered life is labelled "rare."

For we, who glory in a state
Enlightened and humane,
Who of the cult of beauty prate,
And prate and prate again,
We merely praise: we do not strive
To keep our lovely things alive!

The flashing spirit of the weir,
  The river's brightest gem—
Can no one hold our Halcyons dear
  Enough to fight for them?
That any one permitted be,
Unlashed, to slaughter fifty-three!

D. A.

EILEEN SOMERSCALES TO EDITH GRAHAM

(Fragment)

13 THE CRESCENT
BATH

Hercules is of course a dear, but I cannot make him see how much nicer he would look if he would go to a better tailor and not be so narrow-minded. Of course curates' clothes are determined for them, but I am sure I have seen some curates who look more like gentlemen than others. Hercules says these things don't matter, and that if one is a curate one ought to look like a curate before anything else. I feel quite sure that that handsome Mr. Wing-Lindsell, who was a curate at St. Peter's in Eaton Square before he went to Crossways near you, always wore a tall hat; but Hercules will stick to his soft felt hat, which now that it is old is so horribly like a Dissenting Minister's. You know how those people try to look like real clergymen.

I heard some people talking in the Pump Room the other day about a really fashionable tailor for the Church, somewhere in London, who has an illustrated catalogue. Do you think you could find out the address and send the catalogue anonymously to Hercules? That might have an effect on him. His address is c/o Mrs. Lammie, 4 Bladud's Lane, Bath. I hope this is not asking too much, but of course I know that your time must be fully occupied with concerts and other amusements in addition to your work. But I don't often ask favours.

Yours ever

EILEEN

EDITH GRAHAM TO LYNN HARBERTON

17A KENSINGTON SQUARE W.

DEAR GUARDIAN,

I go to see poor old Margaret at the Hospital twice a week. The nurse says there is no hope for her, and I think she knows it, but she is very brave and patient. She lies there all day and never complains. You are still Master Lynn to her. I did not like going at first, for there is something very dreadful to me about the idea of a hospital—rows and rows of poor creatures in pain. The smell of disinfectants fills me with a kind of sinking fear long before I really get into the ward. But I am getting over that now, and directly the patients begin to

cease to be strangers it is easier, even though they are no less ill. Several of them are dying.

I know quite a lot now, because it often happens that Margaret has to be left for a little, and so I go away to other beds and then come back again. There is a most engaging girl near her, a flower girl, who talks excruciating Cockney talk and has some dreadful internal complaint from which she cannot recover. She calls out the most embarrassing things to me. The other day she said, "If you was ill, miss, like me, I know the fellers would all come round you like flies." Nothing will make her believe that I am not engaged. "Now do tell me what he's like, there's a lovey," she says in the most endearing eager way. "Is 'is 'air curly? My bloke's curls are a fair treat."

It is dreadful to think of these poor doomed creatures. And they lie there so quiet and dumb under the strokes of ill fortune, while the cab-whistles and street cries and London's rumble come through the walls to tell them of what is lost. It is that that makes me so sad—to think of what they are missing and will never know again. Yet I suppose one has to be quite well to realise this fully:—they are all so tired with illness and pain that their senses are deadened and they think rather of the blessedness of ending it all.

But not my flower girl. She is full of interest in life still. I have to buy my flowers always at the same place—in Oxford Circus—because it is there

that her sister sits: a woman much older than herself, with a large family, one of whom is usually with her sucking a penny. Think of sucking a penny! I told her about it one day, but she only laughed and said, "Bless your 'eart, miss, that don't 'urt Londoners." Bertha (that is my flower girl's name) always asks me who was there, and what kind of flowers were being sold, and how her sister seemed to be doing. And I have to tell her about new things in London—motor 'buses, and what plays are on, and who is at the Pavilion. I know all kinds of things about Music Halls I should never have known but to tell her. She used to go to the Middlesex every Saturday night with her bloke. It's only threepence, it seems. "That's the plice for fun," she says. But she will go no more and her bloke never comes to see her.

I wanted to go and find him and urge him to come, but she said no. "He knows," she said, "but 'e can't stick illness. It's all right, miss. Don't you worry about me." It is rather beautiful, isn't it, that having lost her bloke and all he stood for for ever, she should so cheerfully set herself to think only of mine! Human beings can be most wonderfully sweet. For most of the little meannesses there seems to be some odd kindness to put in the other scale.

Good-night

EDITH

EDITH GRAHAM TO JOHN LINDSAY FROME

17A KENSINGTON SQUARE W.

DEAR JACK,

I was sorry to be so inhospitable when you came with your friend this afternoon, but you see that I am not my own mistress at all, but Mrs. Pink's servant, and she wanted me all the time. If you want me to go out with you you must give me longer notice, and even then I don't promise to do so, for I want to keep out of motor cars as long as I can, and I am sure you ought not to come away from Oxford like this. What is it that your two placards say, in your rooms? And how about Deuce's daily walk? But it was very kind of you to come, all the same, only I would rather you were working.

Yours sincerely
EDITH GRAHAM

GWENDOLEN FROME TO EDITH GRAHAM

THE RECTORY
WINFIELD

DEAR OLD EDITH,

The news is that Miss Cogan has now gone completely dotty and has a nurse all the time, but she is just as sweet as ever to me. At the present moment

she is at Scarborough, and her sister with her family are at the cottage, and Miss Cogan keeps writing to father by almost every post to ask him to do all kinds of odd things. I copy the beginning of a letter that came this morning :

> Will you kindly see that my sister has a perfectly clean bed and clean bedroom and an open stove in the room and clean persons to wait upon her and light and warm clothing both by day and night and also a clean warm rug for her own use and plenty of fish and good food. Also that she has good society every day and her own dear children's company.

It is part of Miss Cogan's madness to believe that all the world is dirty; that is why there is so much about cleanness in the letter.

Just before she was taken away she asked father to tea, and he went, and he found the room all covered with little placards. One said, "To read sermons from manuscript is a great mistake," and another "Should clergymen have their own shooting? Our Lord had none." Father was awfully tickled by that, and in a really good temper, for him, for about two days.

All your old cats are pretty well and particularly shirty. I feel like a criminal when I make my rounds, the crime being that I am not Miss Edith.

Yours ever

GWEN

PROVIDENCE AND THE PUNSTER

DENNIS ALBOURNE TO EDITH GRAHAM

8 Hare Court
The Temple

Dear Miss Graham,

Do you think you would be able to come to Kew with me on Saturday or Sunday afternoon? There is a very wonderful orchid I want you to see, and it is now at its best. We can get there very quickly from Gloucester Road.

I called yesterday on the Rowans, and picked up a piece of very useful information, rather oddly. "Do you know," Phyllis said very gravely, "that you can't shoot a hippopotamus with a lead bullet. The lead just flattens on the skin or goes a little way into it. You can shoot a hippopotamus only with a platinum bullet. Platinum is much more expensive than gold." She had got all this, I suppose, from a miscellaneous lesson and (like a good journalist) had at once made the knowledge her own and was passing it on as an original discovery.

One thing that is very certain is that no opportunist whose learning is of the hand to mouth order ever has to wait long for a chance to make his impression. Just as the man who prepares his impromptu jokes beforehand will always have a way made clear for him to bring them in, even elaborate and out-of-the-way puns (Providence indeed makes things very easy for the punster: here, at any rate), so does the Autolycus type of savant always get his

openings. That very evening I chanced to meet a big-game hunter, who had recently returned from Africa with scores of skins, and I was able quite negligently and naturally to ask if he had found his way with a platinum bullet under the skin of a "hippo." (Instinct told me to say "hippo.") He became quite human at once and told me enough odd things for three essays. I shall try it on Royce one day.

I picked up a nice old book this morning on a stall in Farringdon Street. It is called *A Thousand Notable Things; or, Various Subjects disclosed from the Secrets of Nature and Art:* an eighteenth-century forerunner of *Enquire Within.* I copy an odd piece of advice concerning the cuckoo:

If you mark where your right foot doth stand at the first time that you do hear the cuckow, and then grave or take up the earth under the same; wheresoever the same is sprinkled about, there will no fleas breed. I know it hath proved true.

The book teems with other secrets not less surprising and valuable. Here are two:

Put two or more quick mice in a long or deep earthen pot, and set the same night unto a fire made of ash wood; when the pot begins to be hot, the mice therein will chirp or make a noise, whereat all the mice that are nigh them will run towards them, and so will leap into the fire, as though they should come to help their poor imprisoned friends and neighbours. The cause whereof Mizaldus ascribes to the smoke of the ash wood.

To keep all sorts of flowers almost in their perfect lustre all the year. Take an earthen glazed pot, with a close cover, air it well in the sun, then fill it with half spring water and half verjuice, and put a little bay salt into it, that may sprinkle over the bottom; put in your flowers with their long stalks half-

blown, the stalks downward, and let the liquor cover the rest an inch or more; close up the vessel, and set it in a warm place, where no frost may get at it. When you take them out wash them in fair water, and hold them before a gentle fire, and they will open and spread in their proper colours.

Let me know about Kew, won't you?

Yours sincerely

DENNIS ALBOURNE

EDITH GRAHAM TO LYNN HARBERTON

17A KENSINGTON SQUARE W.

DEAR GUARDIAN,

This afternoon has been dedicated to culture. Mr. Rodwell came to lunch and then took me to some picture galleries. "I am going to show you a master of whom probably you have never heard," he said as we walked into a little room filled with water colour drawings by — whom do you think? George Clausen. I did not say that you had two of Clausen's best pictures on your walls, but let Mr. Rodwell take me from drawing to drawing and tell me why they were good—all in a high voice which soon made us the centre of attention, especially as in praising one man Mr. Rodwell always contrives to damage several others, some of whom were very likely in the room. Then we went to the New English Art Club and the merits of Orpen and John

were exposed to me. Orpen is not even a name at Winfield, Mr. Rodwell conjectured, and instantly I saw the little red chalk drawing of a mother bathing a baby, which hangs over your desk. That is one of the amusing things about the cultured Londoners —they have, as Mr. Albourne says, no "extra-mural magination." They still look on the provinces as the wilderness and believe that no good thing can exist there. Whereas it is we who really buy their books and their paintings and go to see their plays.

Good-night

EDITH

LYNN HARBERTON TO EDITH GRAHAM

GRAND HOTEL
PALERMO

DEAR CHILD,

Here we are, all safe but tumbled about. It was rough and cold, but one perfect thing which I shall never forget happened on the voyage. A school of porpoises: so beautiful and swift. I don't know at what rate they were actually going, but the effect was one of bewildering yet perfectly-controlled and joyous swiftness. The swiftness of the motor car is cruel, remorseless; but the celerities of these beautiful fish were happy and safe. I lay face downwards over the bows of the vessel for the few minutes

they were with us, and missed not one of their marvellous evolutions. After this I feel I have nothing to learn either of speed or gusto.

You may go to the ant for silent admonishings against sloth; you may go to the cod for its liver, and to the foot of the calf for jelly; but for swiftness allied to perfect beauty, swiftness essential, such swiftness as a liberated soul enjoys in dreams, the highest swiftness one need ever wish for (even if it is not actually the swiftest)—for this one must go to the porpoise.

The captain turned out to be a very good fellow, full of natural education and extraordinarily quick to take a point. His Philistinism was unalterable but admirable. I jotted down one of our conversations on Art directly it was finished. It began by his remark that there was nothing to see in Rome. "But there are pictures at Rome," I said. "Yes," he replied, "yes. You know what they are, I suppose? Over in that corner the Virgin and Child: and in that the Child and the Virgin, and in between 'em Christ on the Crost. Miles of them. And it's the same all over Italy. My taste, sir, isn't for what they call Masters. Give me a picture of a landscape, or a ship at sea, or the photographs in the illustriated papers. Why, some of them photos is beautiful."

I made a note of two or three other of his remarks or stories. He is a great reader, but he has not allowed the written word of others to influence the spoken word of himself. "I wish you'd lend me

one of them Taunchies," he said to me. I was utterly bowled out until he went on to describe them as the white paper-covered books I had bought at Marseilles. He meant Tauchnitz, and his own variant was I think better.

He has a pleasant sardonic way. It seems that our engineers, who are notoriously never satisfied with their food, had grumbled so much on the voyage to Marseilles that it was decided to let them henceforward cater for themselves, on what is called the weekly system, and not come to the cabin at all. At our first dinner the captain, laying down his soup spoon for a moment, looked across the table at the mate with a grim smile playing over his weather-tanned face. "I wonder what those engineers are eating to-day," he said, and then after a pause,—"peacock, I reckon."

Yours

L.

GWENDOLEN FROME TO EDITH GRAHAM

THE RECTORY
WINFIELD

DEAREST EDITH,

The most extraordinary thing has happened. You know I told you about old Job and his lazy pigheadedness? Well, he has suddenly become

busy and civil and the garden is beginning to look like itself. And what do you think the reason is? Old Job is converted. He went to a revivalist meeting last week with his niece, and he came back a perfect lamb. And now he's as mild as milk and we hear him singing the Glory Song all day long over the wall. It's perfectly awful the sounds he makes, but there's no doubt that it's doing your garden good. So you needn't worry about it any more just yet. Job came up this morning with a melon and asked if mother would accept of it, and he went away groaning out "That will be glory for me."

Yours

GWEN

EDITH GRAHAM TO LYNN HARBERTON

17A KENSINGTON SQUARE W.

DEAR GUARDIAN,

Before I go to bed I must tell you a delicious thing. A new prophet, an escaped monk, has come to England with an introduction to Mrs. Pink. Wishing to know something more of him before he was entrusted with the freedom of the drawing-room pulpit, she asked him to dinner to-night. She is delighted with him, of course, and has been talking of his eloquence and sincerity and the beauty of his

message long after women of seventy-two ought to be in bed; but I have my doubts.

And this is why. In the bad quarter of an hour before dinner he was talking to me. Beginning with the proximity of Derry and Tom's, and whether or not Kensington Square was rheumatic, he rapidly switched off to his own affairs and told me that no remark had so touched him as Emmanuel Kant's confession that two things there were that filled him with awe—the starry heavens and man's moral law. This seemed to me abrupt but sound enough, although too shoppy perhaps for a dinner party.

The dinner came, and during a sudden lull after the *entrée* (chickens' livers and mushrooms, which we always have) I heard the ex-monk's voice remarking to his partner, Cynthia Hyde, that there were two things which filled him with awe—the starry heavens and man's moral law. "Yes, indeed," she said, wondering (if I know anything about her) whether any of her boys had caught a cold during the day.

After the men came into the drawing-room Mr. Albourne sat by me. "So that's the latest prophet," he said. "He's been talking to me like one of the fellows in the Park. Have you had any?" I told him I had. "And do you agree with him about those two things?" he added. "What two things?" "The starry heavens and man's moral law?" Then we both laughed.

And now Mrs. Pink, just as I was leaving her

room, called out, "O my dear, did you hear that wonderful quotation which Dr. Prescott Ings used, about the starry heavens and man's moral law?"

He is to preach, I mean discourse, on Sunday week, in spite of the opposition of Dr. Greeley Bok, our other American at the moment, whose special line is the philosophy of Confucius and its suitability for English inquiring and restless hearts. Miss Fielding, who is also speculating a little with her spare money, says, "Every fresh creed means a rise in New Testaments"; and I hope she is right.

Good-night

EDITH

SIR HERBERT ROYCE TO EDITH GRAHAM

(Fragment)

MORTON'S HOTEL
JERMYN STREET

Of course you are having much too easy and comfortable a life, but it won't hurt you. It would be utterly harmful to many girls of your age to be so fortunate, but not to you. There is something almost diabolical about your detachment. You will never I hope claim any credit for your merits. People who are not tempted deserve no praise: it was for them that virtue was agreed to be its own

reward. Now, if *I* am good it is something, because my nature is twisted and I am given to violent outbreaks of temper and misanthropical fury; but if you are good it is nothing, because with you to be good is to take the line of least resistance. I am not sure you ought not, by a really imaginative judge, to be punished for your goodness and rewarded for some outburst of impatience or unkindness which it would need any amount of courage on your part to accomplish. But I don't blame you for your goodness, Edith.

LYNN HARBERTON TO EDITH GRAHAM

GRAND HOTEL
PALERMO

MY DEAR CHILD,

It is Sunday evening and I write this in a very noisy café. I have been sharing a Sicilian holiday with some gusto. I am sleeping on land till we leave on Tuesday morning. There is nothing like land.

"My day among the dead was passed": for I spent an hour of this bright Sunday in the catacombs here among thousands of defunct Palermitans —a most curious experience. It is a regular resort on Sundays, just as a cemetery is with us. You go up the hill to the house of the Capuchins and there

descend into the earth into long passages lined with coffins. A monk holding a taper guides you. The passages were originally of good width, but the press of coffins on either side has so narrowed them that in places we had to walk in single file. The captain came with me; indeed it was he who planned the expedition. The coffins are not oak, like those in England, but flimsy boxes with a glass side or lid to permit a sight of the body within. Above the coffins, which were piled higher than our heads, the walls are lined with the skeletons and bodies of monks, strapped once into an upright position, but now for the most part fantastically awry. So, for hundreds of yards. Such catacombs are not uncommon, but the peculiarity of these at Palermo is that the bodies are dressed as in life. Once it was the custom every All Souls' Day for the relatives to renew the clothing, but the practice has lapsed, and a thick layer of dust now whitens all the folds. The effect is grisly and forbidding, and, to those to whom the order of an English cemetery is familiar, impious. The dignity of death has vanished.

The monks wear a brown roped cassock, but the bodies in the coffins, being of all classes, are in every conceivable variety of crumbling attire: here a dignitary of the church grinning beneath a cap of white satin with a cross of gold: here a young girl: here a nun with crossed hands: here a Sicilian peasant woman: here a fisherman: here a child: everywhere dead Palermitans struck down in all stages of

life and all made grotesque by clothes. One never realised before how necessary to clothes is movement; how unnecessary to death are clothes. I recall particularly two brave young fellows lying side by side, ridiculous in stiff linen collars.

Sometimes a coffin contains a portrait of the ruin within when in the pride of the flesh. The name and date are on each, some belonging to the present decade, some carrying one back nearly two centuries —but all equally of the past. For the most part there is no attempt at arrangement—indeed the place is a miracle of neglect—but one dark passage is stored with young girls wearing the virgin's crown, and some of their photographs look sadly back at you with sweet Southern eyes. And above them is the everlasting line of cassocked monks—hideously, comically askew and rickety.

Our guide, who had a small but useful store of English, enjoyed a red letter day: he told us personal anecdotes of certain of the more recent bodies—the business of this man, and the income of that, and led us rapturously to a mummified baby which had been embellished by her bereaved parents with two glass eyes as nearly as possible of the same shade. He showed us also a giant monk, and related the story of an eccentric old maid who was in the habit of visiting the catacombs every day, and there taking her constitutional walk. From end to end she would pace, tapping with her finger (as our Doctor touched posts) all skulls within reach. One

morning a skull dropped from its body as her finger struck it, and falling on the pavement began to roll, and rolled on and on along the vault until it had rolled the old woman's wits away, and she left the convent raving and died the same afternoon. "In ze skull," explained the monk gleefully, "a rat—a rat in ze skull making it to roll."

Then suddenly he bade us halt at a part of the catacombs where the corpses were singularly destitute of superficial interest. His eyes brightened, his frame quivered, his hand shook: the man was wonderfully wrought to a high pitch of excitement. I never saw any one so thrilled with pride and exultation. We waited till the puzzle should be explained. Then in a voice tremulous with emotion and triumph, and pointing the while at a poor withered body dressed unpretentiously in dirty rags, he exclaimed as he drew himself to his full five feet four inches, "Zis, zis was my gran'father."

It is now midnight and I am very tired.

Good-night

L.

SIR HERBERT ROYCE TO LYNN HARBERTON

MORTON'S HOTEL
JERMYN STREET

DEAR LYNN,

I walked a little way this evening from Mrs. Pink's with the most repulsive of her prophets—an

American named Bok who preaches a muddy form of self-gratification under the name of Confucianism. He pretends to have been to China, but I should guess has not been nearer that land than the joss-houses of San Francisco. He plied me with questions as to your ward so artfully disguised that I detected the game and told him she was Mrs. Pink's adopted daughter and heiress. I fancy he took the bait, for he is only half clever. We shall see.

Since I left London these people have discovered eating. There are restaurants everywhere now, all pretentious and bad. To spend money on elaborate meals in great rooms where scores of other people, chiefly Jews, are doing the same is perhaps the most foolish act an Englishman can perform ; but it has been decreed and must be carried on. One wonders who are the hotel proprietor and milliner of genius who make the laws which govern London smart society. The word goes out that this horror is to be worn, and ruinous meals eaten in public, and there is no appeal. I dined at a restaurant recently with the Patersons. It is called the best here, but we were treated like dirt immediately the wine waiter discovered that we preferred claret to champagne. Respect is now given only to champagne drinkers : there are no palates in London restaurants. The Patersons were so excited at being in a restaurant at all that they submitted to anything ; and our meal, which cost Paterson an absurd sum, as I could

not help seeing, was a disgrace. But the folly will go on.

Yours
H. R.

LYNN HARBERTON TO EDITH GRAHAM

SS. VANESSA, PALERMO

We are just sailing. I have had a telegram from my sister to say that my brother Arthur has died suddenly in India. He seems to have been overworking, and then over-exerting himself in the heat on his holiday, and this laid him open to an attack of fever from which he could not rally. He was my twin, which brings it home to me all the more—added to the fact that I was often far too quick and impatient with him.

How I shall get through these hours of voyage to Algiers in a cramped ship I do not know. I shall have to talk to you on paper, my dear.

L.

EDITH GRAHAM TO LYNN HARBERTON

17A KENSINGTON SQUARE W.

DEAR GUARDIAN,

I have had a proposal, and I think I can with a clear conscience enclose the gentleman's letter. I

do not feel I am violating any canon of good taste by doing so. I need not say how I replied.

In haste to catch the post.

EDITH

DR. GREELEY BOK TO EDITH GRAHAM

(Enclosed in Edith's letter to her guardian)

THE SHAKESPEARE PRIVATE HOTEL
BLOOMSBURY PLACE W.C.

MY DEAR MISS GRAHAM,

It will probably come as no surprise to you when I say that I have for some time entertained for you a stronger feeling than one of mere friendship or even admiration. Man, even intellectual man, is a dependent creature, and for such work as mine—the spread of a philosophy so calm and austere as that of Confucius, in a city like London, so filled with feverish pleasure-loving and self-confident people, a partner of equal mentality to one's own to cheer and soothe one is in the highest degree a necessity. Some men can fight alone, others require a cup-bearer. I am one of these last; and I ask you if you will be my cup-bearer.

One thing I ought perhaps to tell you, as I value candour above almost all the virtues of the second degree. I have a wife still living in America. But although I respect and cherish her, any love that I

once felt for her has completely disappeared. When I married I was only twenty-two, a callow youth in the grip of superstitions. Since then I have developed in all directions; my view of life is totally different; my conception of my own duty is different; and I have exchanged the sentimental prejudices and cowardices which here and in America we call religion for the true wisdom of the East. It might indeed be argued with reason that my wife is already a widow, since the Greeley Bok that married her has utterly ceased to exist. But I shall not put forward such a plea. I should instead obtain a divorce as swiftly as might be—which in our country is not difficult—and allow her a generous income.

Dear Miss Graham, pray excuse this long parenthesis, but I wish there to be no misunderstanding between us. I ask you for your hand because I believe that no woman could so help me in my mission as you. In return I offer you my love and admiration and a heart of unsullied loyalty. I have never met a lady who so impressed me with her intelligence, sympathy and womanliness combined. Take time to think over what I say; but if my letter is no surprise to you, and you acquiesce at once, would you be willing to stand at my side during my address next Sunday afternoon? That would be such a beautiful way of intimating to our friends that we were to carry on the work together.

Your devoted servant

GREELEY BOK

SIR HERBERT ROYCE TO LYNN HARBERTON

MORTON'S HOTEL
JERMYN STREET

DEAR LYNN,

I found Mrs. Pink in despair last evening. It seems that her Confucian, under the impression that Edith was her adopted daughter and heiress, has proposed marriage, as I guessed he would, adding (which I did not expect) the confession that he already possesses a wife in America, but offering very handsomely to divorce her instantly. This has completely done for the old lady, whose sympathy with revolutionists and revolt stops short of any low-bred action —almost at action of any kind. She has of course forbidden the Doctor the house, and I am to deliver the decree of banishment. I believe she rather hoped I should go on to offer to kick the prophet, as indeed my general remarks upon him have entitled her to: but I am subject to sudden and unexpected visits of the devil of tolerance (who is part pity, part understanding, part interest in roguery and foolishness, and largely doubt as to whether I have earned the right to kick anything), and one of these visits coming just then, I was harmless. As you once told Edith, my bark is worse than my bite. Besides it was largely my lie about Edith that caused him to misbehave—if anything so natural as cupidity can be called misbehaving.

Later. I saw the Doctor to-day and gave him his notice to quit, which he took like a lamb, remarking only, "You would understand better if you were as poor as I am, and if you knew my wife." "My dear man," I nearly said, "I understand perfectly as it is," but I held my peace and went.

Yours
H. R.

EDITH GRAHAM TO SIR HERBERT ROYCE

17A KENSINGTON SQUARE W.

DEAR SIR HERBERT,

I am glad you were kind to him. It was a very horrid letter, I know, and he ought never to have written it—but I am so very glad you were kind.

I should love to go to the theatre to-morrow night, and Mrs. Pink says I may—anything you choose will suit me.

I don't mind what you say about me, but I do so wish you were not so eager to do away with all the nice motives. It seems to me so horrible to lose belief in human nature's sweetness. I am sure I know many persons who are continually doing what they think to be their duty without complaining, though they would much rather be doing something else, and that is unselfishness, isn't it? I suppose you will prove it to be quite the reverse. In that

case I shall say what Miss Fielding was saying this morning when we were discussing it, and that is that there are some truths that are not worth telling. Too much self-indulgence in telling the truth, she says, can be as undesirable as too much self-indulgence in drink.

Yours sincerely
EDITH GRAHAM

ORME RODWELL TO EDITH GRAHAM

(Private)

BEAUCHEF HOTEL
EASTBOURNE

MY DEAR MISS GRAHAM,

I have by this post written to my aunt to ask her good services in promoting a new weekly review to be called *The Discerner*, which I have planned more with a thought to you than anything else. We have talked so often about what a paper should be, and how it should discover young writers and encourage them; and *The Discerner* is to do just that thing. But it is useless to try to start it without money, and so I have written to Mrs. Pink. It is quite likely that her first impulse will be to answer the letter instantly in the negative, because I have once or twice before made somewhat similar requests; but I was then not really ready as I am now. I am older and riper

now, and I have you as a Mentor and Muse; and this time I am convinced of success. So will you do all you can to interest my aunt in *The Discerner*, for though I have other rich friends she is the one whose help I should most value.

I am

Your devoted servant

O. R.

ORME RODWELL TO MRS. PINK

BEAUCHEF HOTEL
EASTBOURNE

MY DEAR AUNT VICTORIA,

It is with much reluctance that I approach you as a beggar, but the responsibility belongs to your constant and vivid interest in intellectual progress. You have often blamed me for occupying too detached a position in a world in which, as you say, every one must do something, however small, to ameliorate the human lot: and I am now ready to take you at your word and begin. I have been working day and night for some time in drawing up the policy of a new weekly review of life, politics, literature and art, to be called *The Discerner*. That was why I looked so fagged the other evening, as you kindly remarked. I have even chosen my staff of contributors and my business manager, and I know of some good offices and good printers.

All I now need is financial backing, and naturally I come first to you, who are so near of kin and have always been so kind to me. I have been into figures with several friends who have had experience in such matters, and it is pretty certain that £10,000 would be sufficient to start on. Of course at first it is all uphill work with a new paper of this character; but once the corner is turned it is all right. I understand that the profits of the *Spectator* are anything from ten to fifteen thousand a year. We should not of course for a long time expect to be as popular as the *Spectator*, but the public must in time come round to new ideas and really arresting prose, and if we can hold on long enough we must be all right. I would have no bad writers on my staff. By the way, I have decided to offer the sub-editorship to Albourne, who will I know jump at it. So long as I am accessible to overlook things and see the important people, his unfortunate lack of University training won't seriously matter.

In addition to general supervision, the first leader, and some of the notes, I should myself review an important book every week and do all the dramatic criticism. I was thinking of putting down my own salary at £750 to start with, and Albourne's at £200.

We estimate cost of paper and printing at £43 a week and the revenue from advertisements at £80: added to this there is the income from selling review copies of books, and I am thinking of giving a coloured caricature of some prominent man with

each number, the honour of being included to be paid for at the rate of £50. Here is an excellent new source of revenue, and I could probably get the artist (I have my eye on a very good man, but a bit of a waster and therefore very cheap) for about two guineas a time. This will show you that I know something about business and am not the poetical dreamer you may have thought me.

I would have come to see you about this, but the preliminaries have so exhausted me that I have gone to Eastbourne for a little while to rest before the work proper begins.

Believe me, dear Aunt Victoria
Your affectionate nephew
ORME RODWELL

ORME RODWELL TO MISS FIELDING

(Private)

BEAUCHEF HOTEL
EASTBOURNE

MY DEAR AUNT ADELAIDE,

It is with much reluctance that I approach you as a beggar, but the responsibility belongs to your extraordinary good sense and interest in intellectual progress. You have often blamed me for occupying too detached a position in a world in

which, as you say, every one must do something, however small, to be independent: and I am now ready to take you at your word and begin. I have been working night and day for some time in drawing up the policy of a new weekly review of life, politics, literature and art, to be called *The Discerner*. That is why, as you may have noticed, I was looking so fagged on Sunday afternoon. I have even chosen my staff of contributors and my business manager, and I know of some good offices and good printers.

All I now need is financial backing, and naturally I come first to you, who are so near of kin and have always been so good in advising me. I have been into figures with several friends who have had experience in such matters, and it is pretty certain that £5000 would be sufficient to start on. Of course at first it is all uphill work with a new paper of this character; but once the corner is turned it is all right. I understand that the profits of the *Spectator* are anything from ten to fifteen thousand a year. We should not of course for a long time expect to be as popular as the *Spectator*, but the public must in time come round to new ideas and really arresting prose, and if we can hold on long enough we must be all right. I would have no bad writers on my staff.

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I would have come to see you about this, but the preliminaries have so exhausted me that I am staying at Eastbourne for a little while, to rest before the work proper begins.

Believe me, dear Aunt Adelaide
Your affectionate nephew
ORME RODWELL

ORME RODWELL TO SIR HERBERT ROYCE

BEAUCHEF HOTEL
EASTBOURNE

MY DEAR ROYCE,

You will remember that we were discussing, the other evening at my aunt's, the necessity for a

new weekly review, one that had really made up its mind on things and would speak it without fear or favour: a forthright discriminating critic of life, literature and art, that should avoid Henley's excesses while exercising all his gifts of sympathy and helpfulness to youthful genius; hit hard without destroying for destruction's sake, as the *Saturday* has often done; and while steering clear of the *Spectator's* Pharisaic rectitude, preserve the best English traditions of fair play and decency. Such a paper, you were saying, is the only one you would care to support; and I am therefore writing to ask you if you will help to capitalise a weekly review, planned absolutely on these lines, which I am projecting.

It is an opportunity I have long desired: indeed I may say that I have silently and sub-consciously been preparing all my life to edit such an organ. I have hit on a perfect title for it—*The Discerner.*

I have gone into figures with a business man with the utmost minuteness, and I find that £10,000 is the sum one ought to have at one's back—not necessarily all at once, but guaranteed—in order to give the venture a real trial. Both my aunts, Mrs. Pink and Miss Fielding, who are wealthy old women, will probably be pleased to contribute handsomely, as I am a great favourite with them, and after what you were saying I don't doubt that you will too. I propose to invite Albourne to be my sub-editor: carefully watched, he should do well; and I have a good

list of contributors. I will look in on you one evening soon to talk it all over.

Yours sincerely
ORME RODWELL

MRS. PINK TO ORME RODWELL

17A KENSINGTON SQUARE W.

DEAR ORME,

I hasten to let you know that I have no money to invest in new papers. As it is, I live up to my income, and there are many things I should like to do for others that I am unable to undertake and that would certainly come before helping to capitalise a new review. I can't understand why you want to start a new paper. Why not join the staff of the *Saturday Review* or the *Spectator*, or one of the papers that now exist and which you are always criticising, and make them better? But I should not be much interested in your venture even if I were richer, because I don't care for sixpenny things. I don't think any paper ought to be more than a penny. Some day I suppose they won't be. Sir Herbert Royce says they would all be a halfpenny at once, were it not that the House of Lords can accommodate only a limited number of peers.

I wish you would try to get something useful to do. I heard the other day of a vacancy for an

educated man to act as general superintendent of the Wanstead Communist Experiment. I wish you would do something like that instead of frittering your time away in clubs and drawing-rooms and reviewing foolish books as if they were wise ones.

Your affectionate

AUNT VICTORIA

MISS FIELDING TO ORME RODWELL

17 VICARAGE GATE
KENSINGTON

MY DEAR THOMAS (as I intend always to call you, since you were named after my father), you surely cannot think I should ever give you money for such a purpose. If you were going to marry a nice girl I might be able to transfer a little stock to you, or rather to her, but I should never assist you in a scheme for a new paper. "Discerner" indeed! What you want to be is a wage-earner. As for this modern fashion for discerning, I am very doubtful about it—I have seen it lead to so much trouble. A man who labels himself a discerner is certainly self conscious beyond decency, and most probably a prig. In the healthy time thirty and more years ago, when I was your age, prigs were called prigs and treated accordingly; but now they seem to be as much petted and encouraged as pet dogs.

As a matter of fact I don't trust your taste at all. Only last Sunday in my own drawing-room you dismissed Tennyson's poetry as "middle-class artistry," whatever that means, and the book by that unfortunate young man that died—Dawson or Dowson—which you left in the hall and called a work of genius, seems to me the most deplorable twaddle. I neither believe in your discerning nor your business acumen, which looks to me very like sweating, and I would rather send a cheque to General Booth—if it weren't for the disastrous effect of his Penitent Form on my poor parlourmaid Winch, who has done nothing but break Dresden figures ever since she was saved.

I am none the less

Your affectionate aunt

ADELAIDE FIELDING

P.S. I never thought you a poetical dreamer.

SIR HERBERT ROYCE TO ORME RODWELL

MORTON'S HOTEL
JERMYN STREET

DEAR RODWELL,

You have made a great mistake in thinking I wanted to invest money in any new papers. My interest in your conversation on the perfect way in journalism was purely academic.

Forgive my frankness when I say that I have no

belief in your capacity as an editor and too much opinion of Albourne's personality to wish to see it subjected to yours. He is of the open world and you are of the University and the Club, and you would quarrel fatally over the first leading article. Please do not misunderstand me, for though what I say may have the sound of brutal candour it is at bottom the truest kindness.

If you really cared for any of the things that I want to see forwarded I might be more sympathetic, but I don't see in you any real enthusiasm for anything but good form and phrase making; and these have never done any good and never will. All progress comes from bad form and blunt speech.

No paper was ever any good in which the writers merely desired to be clever. Cleverness fills no voids. There is only one thing to do in this life and that is to mean something. What is the matter with you is that you don't mean anything. You have no purpose. You leave off every evening just where you began. Such men can't edit papers. No, you must go on as happily as you can finding new adjectives for Old Masters and young decadents: that is your work. But don't throw away other people's money on a scheme that is as certain of failure as you and I are certain of death.

Yours sincerely
HERBERT ROYCE

LYNN HARBERTON TO EDITH GRAHAM

VILLA DELACROIX
ALGIERS

DEAR CHILD,

I am here at last, after the mournfullest voyage. I almost wonder they did not heave me overboard for a Jonah. I find my brother and sister in the lowest spirits too; but the sun will shine again.

I can think of nothing but the whole disheartening business of permature death. Here was a man whom every one liked, unselfish, helpful, the friendly adviser of half a dozen families, investor of their money and so forth—a man who was valuable in the social scheme beyond most. And he is struck down in a moment, while parasites, and back-biters, and clogs-on-the-wheel like our Winfield friends Burton and Wilbraham, have robust health. But of course it is useless to look for reason in such matters. We are permitted brains enough to devise the telescope and the microscope, the telegraph and the camera, and to write *Hamlet* and *Rudin* and the *Ode on Intimations of Immortality*; but when it comes to the only really interesting discoveries there are, we are just baffled blockheads, and are fobbed off with a text about babes and sucklings. I give it up. To make as decent a show as a gentleman as one can, to defer and neglect kindness as little as possible: that is the

beginning and end of my religion. I am not one of those who can see in every disaster and bereavement some new manifestation of loving control. My sister Annie can, and it is beautiful to know it, but I simply don't possess that kind of mind.

L. H.

DENNIS ALBOURNE TO EDITH GRAHAM

8 HARE COURT
THE TEMPLE

DEAR MISS GRAHAM,

Just a line, to copy out for you a delicious fragment of a story which little Enid Osborne (aged seven) was telling herself aloud this afternoon, as she walked up and down the room. Osborne and I hid behind the *Chronicle* to disarm her suspicions, as she hates to be listened to, and indeed stops at once. I took down the phrases exactly as she spoke them. Pretty good for seven years old, I think : but it comes largely of having a literary father and no brothers and sisters to normalise her.

You must imagine that a husband and wife are talking, the parents of course of the fascinating heroine, who is always the same in these romances —a little beautiful girl dressed in pink. Just as the heroines of older feminine novelists so often are the authors themselves as they would like to have been, so is Enid's heroine Enid. This is the passage. The father speaks first :—

"I think it is ridiculous of you to have dismissed cook. You know perfectly well that I can't put up with the parlourmaid's cooking."

"Well, I thought you said we were very poor."

"Rubbish. I daresay I could lay my hands on a million. That ought to carry us on for a few months. And if I can't, I'll write some articles and make lots of money."

So he handed her twelve shillings to be laid out in writing-pads, ink and pens, and then he sat down to write his articles. To his surprise, however, the editors to whom he sent them would not pay anything for them but charged him a pound for reading them.

There is an idea there for editors whose papers won't otherwise turn the corner. We must get it laid before Rodwell.

Yours

D. A.

LYNN HARBERTON TO EDITH GRAHAM

VILLA DELACROIX
ALGIERS

MY DEAR CHILD,

We are going to be more cheerful now, but I have had to set down some of my thoughts on paper by way of clearing the path to that end. It is rather odd that although I am getting on for thirty-eight I have never realised death before. It means, I suppose, that when my parents died I was too young to reason it out. Arthur's death, however, has set Mortality at my elbow. I cannot shake it off.

Those are the real divisions of life—before we are brought face to face with death, and after we know that we too have to die. The discovery of our own mortality—or rather the discovery that we are not after all to be immortal—is the true beginning of the end. Put in another way, the discovery that we have to die is the discovery that youth has left us, that the fine free charter has been withdrawn and that now and henceforward we are responsible, self-dependent. For so long we had been insisting upon our irresponsibility. We had claimed, like the dog, a first bite; like the cricketer, a trial ball; nothing was to count just yet: every one was to be called upon to produce enough charity to cover all our offences, and some pretty temper was ready did they take any other view. You can hardly blame us, for the tradition of youthful irresponsibility is very old, very honourable. England fosters it in a thousand ways, and at the universities. Proverbial philosophy is on our side too, insisting that young blood shall have its day, that it is ill looking for old heads on young shoulders; and so forth.

But the fact is greater than all; and suddenly the sound of the scythe is heard very near at hand, and all is changed. We know now that we too have to die, that we too are normal, unexceptional, after all. The amnesty is withdrawn. We learned it, say, last night; and to-day our sight, once so casual, is microscopic. What an air of artificiality certain recent high spirits wear—almost we can believe them

rouged! And a great portion of our happy-go-lucky detachment has surely been a waste of time—rather a vicious waste too, it may be. Worse than all, life, that a week ago was so long, has shrunk to startlingly poor dimensions.

At the back of most young men's minds—even the young men who are to an outside observer hopelessly in the machine—is the thought, not perhaps expressed but present, "When I really begin . . ." Then, like Lear, they will do "such things." That they are to be rich is beyond question. We are always to be rich. We all believe in miracles. I remember that at school we used to lay each other terrific wagers, running into thousands, millions sometimes, "to be paid in manhood." Not a boy but believed himself safe to discharge such liabilities. I for one was in no doubt.

I speak of the death of youth, and yet youth dies not one death but many. Every early friend that is left to us—every early enemy too if we have any (and I believe very little in enemies)—nourishes one of youth's little lives. "To the last he called me Charley. I have none to call me Charley now"—so wrote Lamb on the death of Randal Norris. On that day died almost the last of Elia's youth, and he was then fifty-two. I have a middle-aged cousin (Henry Ellis I mean: I don't think you ever saw him) towards whom to this moment I always feel like a small boy; probably I always shall. Not even in middle-age, not even after one has found

them out, does one quite lose, in the presence of uncles and aunts, the ancient childish feeling. They also conserve our youth.

With the discovery that we are not immortal a change comes over all. We may keep the same front to the world, or nearly so, for human nature has vast powers of recovery; but in the watches of the night and in the lonely places our hearts will falter. We know now; before we had only suspected, and spurned the suspicion. The thought of death may not be always in mind, but it will be within call, just round the corner. The softest whistle will bring it at the run, alert, servile, efficient—so soft that sometimes it will mistake a sigh for the signal.

It has come to me late, as I said, this realisation of mortality; although I suppose that the fact that one has so many thoughts about it all at one's fingers' end is proof that one has sub-consciously meditated upon it much. (This sub-conscious meditation is a very curious thing. Is it done at night? Do we think as we sleep, and cover the seriousness of our thoughts with a veneer of imbecile dreaming to preserve the secret? Perhaps there is no such thing as improvisation—one has been for years preparing oneself beneath the stupors of the night for every emergency.) To most persons I fancy the idea of mortality appeals with full force in the middle thirties: the duration of the first grand irresponsible period corresponding nearly exactly to that of a human generation—thirty-three years.

Perhaps if I had not been thinking exclusively of Dr. Johnson for so long I should have realised it earlier; although nothing in this life can happen until the hour strikes. Heaven knows there is a sufficient supply of admonition to youth, pressed down and running over, to render him wise as the serpent; and yet every one must make his own discoveries. It is not counsellors but facts that perform the awakening feat. And even certain facts that we might have supposed powerful in the extreme do not effect it. Marriage, one would say, is a fact that should give pause, if any crisis can. But does it? We marry long before the awakening age, and seldom does that sacrament evoke the menace, the foreboding. Society has agreed that we shall marry light-heartedly; the thought that every child is yet another sentient human being subject to ills and frustrations, regrets and doubts, and finally to the conqueror too, never penetrates our complacent heads. It seems that only a surgical instrument can get such knowledge into the skull of youth. A scythe. Knowledge of the seriousness of marriage, the irrevocableness of it, comes later, with all the other crowding discoveries; but not until the end has begun. At first a wife is but a sharer of life's fun and irresponsibilities; children are jolly little beggars, more expensive, perhaps, than kittens and puppies, and more to be considered when in distress, but otherwise not seriously to occupy the mind. Marriage is, in fact, merely a good-humoured rati

fication of the youth of two persons rather than the awakening of either. It starts as a compact of pleasure, in spite of the church, of Dr. Ibsen and Mr. Hardy. As a high road to the great discovery of the beginning of the end it hardly counts, although when the discovery has come it may be a terrible fortifier. The awakener I suspect is almost invariably the Reaper himself.

My dear child, what a serious letter. Well, I don't often bother you in this way and it has done me good. I am like the great Tartarin: he had to talk in order to think; and I have been writing in order to comfort myself a little.

Good-night

L.

ANNIE HARBERTON, LYNN'S SISTER, TO CYNTHIA HYDE

VILLA DELACROIX
ALGIERS

DEAR CYNTHIA,

I wonder if you remember me the least little bit. I am Annie Harberton and we were at school together at Eastbourne. Please remember me if you can, because I remember you so well and am so glad for the chance which enables me to revive our friend-

ship. Perhaps it will call me to mind better than anything else if I say that when we acted *As You Like It* I was Orlando to your Rosalind. Now you *must* remember, because it was I who fell over the footlights and hurt Mr. Palmer the music-master so badly. I have heard of you again in the most curious way—through my brother Lynn, who is now staying with us and who is the guardian of Miss Graham, your aunt's secretary and companion. She has told him in her letters so much about you, and he has told us. Of course I knew it was you at once, having heard of your marriage to Mr. Hyde and retaining his name in a corner of my brain these past fifteen years in the odd way one does.

Marriage has not come to me, but I do not grumble about it, being very happy here in looking after my brother. We are delighted to have Lynn with us, although he arrived very gloomy under sad circumstances, our youngest brother having just died in India. Much of Lynn's heart is I fear in his library at Winfield, and most of his time seems to be spent in wondering to what dull author he will give up the next five years of his life as he gave up the last five to that very grubby person Dr. Johnson; but he is very nice and we love to have him with us again.

If you have time to spare from your boys and other duties to write me a line I should be so very grateful. Particularly I want to hear about Miss Graham, for

my brother Lynn says very little and what he does is not very enlightening.

I am, dear Cynthia
Yours affectionately
ANNIE HARBERTON

EDITH GRAHAM TO LYNN HARBERTON

17A KENSINGTON SQUARE W.

DEAR GUARDIAN,

A rather ridiculous thing has happened. Two polar bears suddenly drew up in a motor car at this door some time ago, and a minute later I was informed that some visitors were waiting to see me. On going downstairs I found that the bears had resolved themselves into Jack Frome and his Oxford friend Algernon Damp, and they had run up for the day (as indeed Jack had threatened they would, but I had not taken him very seriously) and were proposing to rush me round Richmond Park or anywhere else I liked. I did not go, and they returned to their furs and Oxford; but ever since I have been receiving books and flowers in a mysterious way, and as one of the books is *The Complete Motorist* I cannot help feeling that Mr. Damp must be the kind benefactor. Jack's allowance would not run to orchids anyway. But as there is no name I cannot stop them.

That is not all. Mr. Rodwell has begun to lend

me books, as you said he would: or rather to give me books. His parcels come with some of the regularity of the bread or the milk. Is there any real need for me to read Pater? I don't mind the anonymous contributions, because that is the end of them; but Mr. Rodwell comes round to know what I think of his pet authors, and that can be very trying.

I do hope you are beginning to see the future a little more clearly and meditating a new work.

Good-night

EDITH

SIR HERBERT ROYCE TO LYNN HARBERTON

MORTON'S HOTEL
JERMYN STREET

DEAR LYNN,

It is very sad about poor Arthur. But I have given up dreading death. I am quite honest when I say that I never go to sleep without quite reconciling myself to never waking again; and this stupid world is so badly managed (a young man like Arthur being allowed to die, a bright, helpful, useful creature, every one's friend), that I simply cannot believe in a better. If there were a better there would be more indications of it here: or so my sceptical mind argues. I don't trust Providence a yard.

What you say in your letter to Edith, which she

has let me read, is very true. For myself, I first realised death when poor Janet died, and I have been dying ever since. We die with others—in part —undoubtedly.

The second division of life, after death begins, is a sad business. I have been in it for some years (did you realise I was fifty-one?). One of the saddest things in it is the impossibility, or at least unlikelihood, of making new friends. We discover gradually but surely that the last friend that a man makes is his wife. It is not that we meet no one to whom we are affectionately drawn; but that we hesitate to give our love with the old careless freedom. We have grown critical, and so have they. It may also involve us in too much emotion: we must be protected. For we have noticed that where we love we suffer or are liable to suffer: death, illness, or disaster occurring to any of our dear ones would hurt us, and we want to be as secure as possible, as free from grief. Security is what we need; we are old enough to appreciate it; it is our due. Security. Have we not given of ourselves very abundantly in the past? It is the time of reward, of harvest, now. So we no longer let our tendrils twine blindly as they used, in the old days, before we knew we had to die, round this heart and that; we clip them and restrain them. We have learnt the hard truth that every new love makes another loophole in our armour through which the arrows of Fate may find a way.

Again, we have fixed habits; and so have our new

acquaintance. Perhaps if we alone were thus handicapped we might strike up one of those old intimacies; the other might give way to us. But serious sacrifices are too much to ask at this late day. An interest in a young man may now and again overtake us, or we may be the object of admiration and even imitation by some pleasant boy; but there is no permanency there: friends must stay in their own generation. And so we make no new friends. We discover that the reason of the special aptitude of youth to make friends is due to the fact that youth is trustful. Only by being trustful can one discover whether a friend is worthy or no; for a friend is one to whom one may confess ill of oneself without fear. With us trustfulness is giving way to suspicion. We have given up the luxury of confession.

If there are no tracts for the middle-aged it is not because the middle-aged are perfect, for the beginning of the end brings many dangers. Youth was liable enough to err, but youth also was malleable, impressionable; it could be played upon. But we, we are growing cool and hard. We are like to become calculating, and what is more horrible than that? We were selfish enough before, Heaven knows, but we are like to be selfish now in a more elaborate way.

There, that's enough of that. I grow cynical. I will go and see Edith.

My advice to you is to smoke more. Those

cigarettes of yours are useless. You should smoke a pipe and you would soon leave off grieving over much. The antidote to sorrow is to fill another pipe.

Give Annie and Wordsworth my love.

H. R.

CYNTHIA HYDE TO ANNIE HARBERTON

THE CORNER HOUSE
LEATHERHEAD

MY DEAR ANNIE,

How very odd that you and I should come together again like this ; and how very dear of you to write at once. Of course I remember you. There is no one who was at Eastbourne that I remember better, and no one that I know anything of to-day except Nelly Bates, who by one of those curious chances married the vicar of this town and whom I therefore have to see far too often. Do you remember her? She always took pepsine at meals (as she still does) and left the room at the annual concert because she thought "The Bedouin's Love Song" too outspoken.

I have been trying to picture you as you now are, in your Eastern home, but it is very difficult. I know so little geography. Do send me a photograph. I send you, you will see, quite a lot. I have written the names under each of the boys. Dermot the eldest is fourteen, Ivan is only eighteen months.

Edith Graham is a dear. It is impossible to think of my aunt's home without her in it, although she has been there only a few weeks. She is also changing the character of the house a good deal, for it was previously a meeting place only for philosophers and frumps, and now the young men are remembering that they know Mrs. Pink and ought to call now and then; and when a young man of the present day pays a call it means something, I can assure you. Edith's willingness to listen to them and be bored by them might in another girl be called flirtation, but in her it is nothing but the wish to be friendly and kindly, and the absence of the ordinary girl's tendency to become artificial whenever a man addresses her. To Edith at present men and women seem to be equally fellow creatures, neither being more dangerous than the other.

If I had any girls I would try to bring them up to have the same feeling; but such things are possible only as long as you can keep children to yourself, and I haven't any girls, and, to be quite frank, don't want any. I am afraid of them.

Do you ever come to England? You must come to see us when you do.

Yours sincerely

CYNTHIA HYDE

LYNN HARBERTON TO MISS FIELDING

VILLA DELACROIX
ALGIERS

DEAR FRIEND,

Having nothing to do, I get philosophic, and think and think and think small philosophy all day long. This morning discovering that the very last remnant of edge had finally departed from my two razors, I sent Yussuf to my brother's room to tell the sad story, and he returned with a selection of six shining weapons all in perfect condition. And as I shaved luxuriously I asked myself how it is that some of us never contrive to possess such good things as others do? "Wherever I visit," a plaintive lady calling on my sister (for there are afternoon callers even in Africa) sighed the other day, "I find better butter than we can get at home. How is it?" I share her gentle wonder. How is it? Soap, too—why have other people so often nicer soap? And books? All the books that I really want are not in booksellers' catalogues, but on other persons' shelves. I called on a friend in the country just before I came away to this alien shore, and he seemed to have around the walls of one room all the books I have ever really wanted. I came home again and almost wished for a fire to destroy all my poor attempts at a library in order that I might begin again properly — except that people tell me that one never gets all the money for which a house

is insured. To begin again properly—is not that human nature's most constant and pathetic wish?

"A poor thing but mine own," said Touchstone, and the formula has passed into the language. But more often such possession, even among those that quote the fool of the forest with most unction, causes contempt or dissatisfaction rather than pride. Touchstone expressed not the general opinion but the philosophic, which is far removed from the general. The philosopher saying "A poor thing but mine own" unites critical acumen with stoical cheerfulness, clear sight with acceptance of the fact, recognition of defect with determination to make the best of it. But most of us are born envious and rarely value what is familiar: hence "A poor thing because our own" is the most natural attitude.

As a matter of fact I am coming to the belief that it is a mistake to have the best at all. Touchstone's attitude is more sensible. The reasons for my belief are two: one is that directly you have the best of anything you have closed an avenue to enjoyment—the enjoyment of waiting for a wish to be realised; the other is that one becomes sorry for those persons whom one sees stumbling along with the inferior article. Perhaps the perfect way is to have access to the best, when you need it, as a Londoner has, for example, with books, in the British Museum Reading Room; and go along cheerfully with the poor things that are your own.

But sorrow for others can often be misplaced. Last

summer an old friend of mine came to spend a day in the country, and as we were to drive to the hills, where there is a view, she brought her field glasses with her. For some years I had done the best I could with just such an ordinary pair, but last summer I became the owner of one of those miraculous prismatic binoculars with a foreign name that bring the horizon to one's feet. I felt wretched as I watched our friend's pathetic devotion to her old battered pair. I pressed my new ones upon her. She took them, made a pretence of understanding the patents with which they bristle, and returned to her own with visible relief. All my sympathy had been wasted. It very often is.

One comes to the question, Has any one the best? Has the King? Has Mr. Pierpont Morgan? Had Madame Humbert? Is there a single household anywhere that can really laugh at the tenth commandment?

I was thinking to-day that a very satisfying epitaph for a man would be just the two words

"He discriminated."

Discrimination is one of the rarest of gifts, as any author knows who reads the favourable reviews of his book. But the two words would carry so much meaning in life as well as literature. By the way, the Hindoos have a saying, "He who discriminates is the father of his father." Isn't that good? It is, I fancy, very much the secret of one's coldness in

the company of Americans, that they so rarely discriminate. A few have done so supremely well—Emerson and Lowell and Henry James for example—but I mean the Americans one meets, the Americans who stay in the London hotels and Bloomsbury boarding-houses and do England and Europe. To these, geese are almost always swans, and swans peacocks.

At the same time if I were a fairy godmother beside the cradle of a child for whom I wished happiness, I think I should hesitate long before I offered the gift of discrimination. It does not make for the greatest happiness either in yourself, in the people whom you meet, or in the people who so much want to meet you. Nor should I offer the gift of wit. A comfortable easy-going obviousness: that would be my contribution. I would leave discrimination to be given by that malicious creature whose invitation to the christening had been forgotten.

Yours

L. H.

MRS. PINK TO MISS FIELDING

17A KENSINGTON SQUARE W.

DEAR ADDY,

I want you to make an exception and be so kind as to come to-morrow afternoon to hear a most

remarkable and interesting young man deliver an address on the Song of Solomon. He is quite orthodox, you need have no fears, and he has a most wonderful voice. He recites the Song of Solomon chapter by chapter to a pianola accompaniment which he plays himself, and after each chapter he expounds the true meaning of the verses. He used to do Omar Khayyám in the same way. It is all most thrilling and makes that part of the Bible quite a new and living thing. I hope you will come, as he is very young and diffident and I want to encourage the poor boy as much as possible.

Your loving

VIC

MRS. PINK TO MISS FIELDING

17A KENSINGTON SQUARE W.

DEAREST ADDY,

Just a line to say that it was certainly rather different from what I expected, and I forgive you, but I don't think there was any need for you to go out in the middle like that. It was so very marked and early Victorian. I am afraid that poor Mr. Perivale was hurt.

Yours

VIC

MISS FIELDING TO MRS. PINK

17 VICARAGE GATE
KENSINGTON

DEAREST VIC,

I meant it to be marked. One must make a protest sometimes. I will do a great deal for you, but no more drawing-room mystics. I never heard anything so brazenly indelicate in my life, and I hope I never shall. I was almost ashamed of my own sister. The only grain of satisfaction that I brought away was that Edith had a headache and was lying down all the time. Do, dear, if you must have these meetings, keep to sober new religions or else supply your guests with fans.

Your loving
ADELAIDE

EDITH GRAHAM TO CYNTHIA HYDE

17A KENSINGTON SQUARE W.

MY DEAR CYNTHIA,

Do come up and try to comfort Mrs. Pink. Yesterday seems to have been something of a tragedy. Fortunately I was out of it, being upstairs with a bad headache, but from what I can gather Mr. Perivale's manner and exposition of the Song of Solomon were more Oriental than Kensingtonian, and several people

left in the middle, headed by Miss Fielding, who had come much against her will. There also seems to have been a little difficulty about Mr. Perivale's fee afterwards, and altogether Mrs. Pink is quite upset and discouraged, and talks of having no more meetings at all. Of course she must not go on feeling like that or she would have nothing to live for. Come up as soon as you can.

Yours
EDITH

LYNN HARBERTON TO EDITH GRAHAM

VILLA DELACROIX
ALGIERS

MY DEAR CHILD,

It is no good urging me to work. I shall work right enough when the time comes; and to a certain extent I am working now, for never a day—hardly an hour—passes in which I do not hit upon some vastly superior way of doing everything I have done hitherto and rewriting all my best sentences. I am just beginning to see how that critical introduction on the Doctor ought to have been written. As a matter of fact no one is ever really ready to do anything. One does it, not because the time has come, but because too much time has gone, and it is human (and very English) to grow tired of preparing.

I sometimes wonder if I shall ever do anything

consecutive any more. I have had a rather agreeable letter from a publisher suggesting a book of essays on whatever themes please me, at whatever length I like; but the prospect is rather forbidding. An essayist is responsible for his words to an extent that forbids any kind of light-heartedness, and for the music of his prose too. Writing notes and precise introductions has knocked all the music out of me; and I feel to-day as if I could get it back only by efforts whose self-consciousness would be far too apparent. But we shall see. The essay is of course the only thing I could write here, away from books and regular habits. How I envy those men who can tell a tale.

I am very lazy here in the sun. I sit about for most of the day, and watch the people and the sea, and read Gibbon. I had not read Gibbon for twenty years, and he is quite twenty years better than he was. But what a task for one man to carry through and never to flag for an instant! It makes me ashamed of ever having suggested that my Johnson was a considerable and exhausting feat.

Good-night

L. H

P.S. I am not always as modest and self-depreciatory as you affirm. Yesterday morning, for example, I wrote something which I admired so much that I suddenly began to fear I must have softening of the brain.

EDITH GRAHAM TO CYNTHIA HYDE

17A KENSINGTON SQUARE W.

MY DEAR CYNTHIA,

I am horribly afraid that Mr. Damp is one of the susceptible people, for he actually came along to-day, in his car, and left a vellum-bound copy of Omar Khayyám. I did not see him, and shall not: but what am I to do?

I thought the Omar fashion was over, but I suppose that Mr. Damp has only just come to it. I more than suspect that the other books and flowers that come so often are from him too; but I cannot very well ask him. Sir Herbert Royce knows a tribe in some out of the way South Sea island where the young men's sole idea of courtship is to leave bunches of a certain kind of grass outside the huts of the ladies of their choice; which is rather a nice comment, he says, on our originality and the refinements of what we call our complex civilisation. But they draw the line at Omar, he says: they are their own Omars, whereas we are merely always getting ready to begin to be Omars and learning the quatrains first.

I suppose I ought to send the book back now that I know for certain it is Mr. Damp's. Do tell me what to do.

EDITH

EDITH GRAHAM TO CYNTHIA HYDE

17A KENSINGTON SQUARE W.

MY DEAR CYNTHIA,

The flowers and books were Mr. Damp's after all, as I always guessed. This morning brought a really magnificent bouquet, with a note in which he said that he proposed to call in the afternoon on a matter of some importance, and at four o'clock the poor youth appeared, so very much like his name and wearing a new kind of collar. He was so kind and uneasy that I could hardly keep from stroking his head; and I believe it would have been the best thing to have done, because he would have been so concerned at any displacement of his hair that all his other troubles would have gone straight to the background. But instead I sat and listened, having a pretty sure notion of what was coming.

He began with "motrin'" and asked me if I preferred a Fiat or a Mercédes. Having no views, but rather shrinking from the decision of the word Fiat, I said I liked the sound of Mercédes because it reminded me of Spain and the sun and castanets, and he said at once that that was the next car he should buy. Then he asked me what colour upholstery I liked best, because it seems you buy the car naked and have it dressed to your own taste. I said a deep dark green, and he instantly agreed with me and said that it should be so; and as he did so brightened

so cheerfully that I felt I must be firm once for all, because it was getting to be beyond a doubt that Mercédes was to have the task of conveying Mr. and Mrs. Damp on their honeymoon.

And so I asked him why he wanted my opinion to take the place of his own, and gradually he told me, and then quite unmistakably I made him understand that it could not be. He was very much upset for some time, and walked about the room, and said that I had punctured him beyond repair, and he should take to record cutting at Monte Carlo and probably be killed on the Corniche.

And then he sat down again and terrified me by beginning to look brighter once more. He went on nervously brightening for some minutes, and saying nothing, and then with many asides and hesitations made the suggestion that it was perhaps not himself that I objected to but the idea of being called by so unhappy a name as Mrs. Damp. Before I could deny this, he hurried to his great project of changing his name, which he was, he said, prepared to do at any moment if only he could decide upon a better; but there were so many to choose from that he could never make up his mind. Would I choose for him? he continued. He would take only too gladly any name I liked.

Dear Cynthia, do I deserve to have had such a second attack? I was unable to say anything for a moment, he looked so eager and pathetic, and then what I thought was a happy idea struck me and I

said I believed that a rule that was often followed in such cases was to take one's mother's maiden name. His face fell instantly and I knew that I had blundered; for it seems that his mother was a Miss Fish.

I don't know what I should have done—for he had no laughter in him, and laughter was of course the only possible remedy—had not the door opened to admit three callers. Poor Mr. Damp at once took his leave, and for the time being I was free again.

Yours

EDITH

JOHN LINDSAY FROME TO ALGERNON DAMP

(Telegram)

Call letter cheek and action blackguardly. No real sportsman poaches other sportsman's preserves. Please return my field glasses.

FROME

ALGERNON DAMP TO JOHN LINDSAY FROME

(Telegram)

Don't be ass. Can't do such things by rule. Badly punctured anyway. Don't want abuse from pals. Am returning rotten glasses.

DAMP

DENNIS ALBOURNE TO EDITH GRAHAM

8 HARE COURT
THE TEMPLE

I had to go into the country yesterday, to Southampton, to see the artist who is going to illustrate my topographical essay, and after I had finished with him and had had dinner, I went to see a travelling circus; and there, Miss Graham, at last, I met a great man.

Great men are few in any case, and we are so much too apt to look for them in the wrong places—in Parliament for example—that we are in danger of missing some even of those that do exist. Now not only did I find a great man, but I discovered a great secret too. I discovered how to spend a holiday.

The secret is that our holidays should rest not only our minds and bodies but our characters too. Take, for example, a good man. His goodness wants a holiday as much as his poor weary head or his exhausted body. I wonder if he should not rest it by becoming for three weeks a bad man. Instead of sitting quietly on the pier, as he now does, he might pick a pocket or two. On returning from a sail in a boat he could furtively bore a hole in it. In his hotel he could mix up the boots, turn out the electric light and decamp without paying his bill. Such expenditure as his holiday involved might be met with a forged cheque. On returning to town all

the errors of the three weeks could be rectified; the handkerchiefs and purses returned to his victims on the pier; provision made for the survivors of those who had been drowned when the boat filled and sank; and so forth. But that is not the point. The point is that he would have had a complete holiday. Similarly a wicked man should rest his wickedness and devote his month at Brighton to good works.

I do not, I must confess, see, in England, any period of prosperity for my plan; but it is sound, none the less. Perhaps the nearest practicable advice to it that one dares to give is that on a holiday we should endeavour to change the conditions of our life in every way as completely as possible. Only thus can a holiday be, for those of us who are active and restless in mind, a genuine rest. For it is not idleness that such require, but a change of employment.

For myself, who am neither good nor bad, and therefore have neither goodness nor badness to rest, the best holiday would be some occupation in the open air of an exciting or continually engrossing character, as utterly opposed to the ordinary routine of driving a pen as could be devised. And I think I have found it. I believe that a perfect holiday would be to join a travelling circus for a week or so as a utility man.

This discovery came upon me in a flash at Southampton as I watched the performance. During one turn—it was that hoary bare-backed jockey act in which the rider sits on the horse's tail and rocks his

arms, and of which I tired permanently thirty years ago—I read in the programme the announcement of the circus's immediate intentions, and it was then that the desirability of such a life made itself felt—desirability at any rate to a weary literary hack who wished to forget his trade and himself in a certain absorbing Bohemian strenuousness. For on the next day there were to be two performances and a grand procession at Winchester; and the next day at Basingstoke; and the next day at Farnham, and so forth—always the two performances and always (weather permitting) the grand procession of triumphal cars through the principal streets at noon.

What a life! Everything in it but sleep, so far as I can see. Popularity, applause, naphtha lamps, might and muscle; the contiguity of wild beasts; tigers, tigers, burning bright in the watches of the night; acquaintance with clowns; proximity to dazzling equestriennes:—all inspiring reverence and wonder in small boys. What a life! And wages, too, honestly earned, and perhaps now and then some food and drink. Perhaps a word from Lord John himself: not necessarily friendly, but a word from a lord.

So I felt as I read the programme, quite content to be just a menial hand. But then came the great man, Pimpo, and I saw that I must aim higher.

I may say at once that Pimpo was the busiest clown I have ever seen, and the most versatile. The ordinary clown, it is true, may now and then be de-

tected by the observant—and all of us are observant in a circus—within the clothes of the ring-master, or among the gentlemen who stand at the entrance with white gloves and applaud the ladies; while his appearance, devoid of humour, among the troupe of acrobats who leap over elephants, is not uncommon. But Pimpo never divested himself of his character as a laughter maker, whatever his rôle might be. And he had more rôles than I can remember. We saw him first as a clown and clown only, winning bottles of wine from the ring-master by a series of adroit sophisms. He was then, as I say, a clown only: a good one, it is true, but no more. He came next with a tea-tray and essayed to loop the loop on it, on this occasion proving himself to be a finished acrobat. A troupe of jumping dogs soon after entered; and who should be their trainer and exhibitor but Pimpo? Later came the great attraction of the evening, if the size of type on the bills is an indication: a "Horde of Forest-bred Siberian Bears." In strolled the horde, very tame and mild, three in number, and sat at a desk and drank milk from a bottle and rode on a toy roundabout—all under the direction of whom? Pimpo. (There is no doubt about his name, for it was on his back.)

Here was versatility enough, one would think; but Pimpo had other views. Only a few minutes passed before he was again in our midst as a wire-walker, doing things in mid-air that I could not do on the ground and putting to shame his three com-

panions, who performed as it were on crutches beside him. And then a final entry, as impresario to a couple of elephants whose special talent was shaving each other and extinguishing a house on fire. That was an evening's work of some magnitude alone; but Pimpo did not merely put his various beasts through their tricks and nothing else: he jested incessantly until the little boys' laughter was as steadily recurrent as the roar of the surge; he tumbled; and once, threatening to fight the ring-master, he took off twenty waistcoats.

The elephants gone, and the burning house extinguished, the circus men began to tear up the seats, and loosen the tent-ropes, and prepare for the march on Winchester. I waited a little to watch them, and then turned away towards my inn. As I did so I caught sight of a sturdy fellow with a chalked face carrying a truss of hay towards the elephants' tent. It was Pimpo, beginning his night's work.

"There," I said to myself, "goes a great man. It is he I would be for a fortnight,—that would be a holiday indeed."

Yours

D. A.

JOHN LINDSAY FROME TO ALGERNON DAMP

(Telegram)

Don't address telegrams Frome or others open them. Address John Lindsay Frome in full. Still

think you acted vilely. Glasses not rotten and not here yet.

FROME

LYNN HARBERTON TO EDITH GRAHAM

VILLA DELACROIX
ALGIERS

MY DEAR CHILD,

I am leaving all the Christmas presents to you, and enclose a blank cheque for them. I want Joan to have a watch. She is quite old enough, or if not quite, the watch may just make the difference. A silver one, but good. I want Cyril to have a star map (I think it is called a Planetarium) and a good astronomy book with it. The younger ones might have books, if the new children's books are not any worse than usual. Perhaps there is a new illustrated Andersen or Grimm. But don't get them anything funny. I leave it to you, as also the whiskey and tea and so forth for the old folks. Get a Shetland shawl for Mrs. Ring and for Job a woollen waistcoat—rather smart, just for fun. He will pretend not to like it, and will secretly burst with pride. Gwen might have a nice piece of old paste.

I want a few books that I see in the advertisements: York Powell's *Origines Islandicæ*, which I seem to have missed; Walter Raleigh's *Blake*; W. P. Ker's *Medieval Literature*; a book on the horse by

that curious man Ridgeway; Birrell's *In the Name of the Bodleian*; F. W. Bain's new fairy tale; Lang's new poems; and the new Life of Charles Lamb by some one, I forget the name, who according to one of the reviews thinks Dr. Parr was a Tory. Well, there have been worse mistakes.

Get for Miss Fielding a large plain silver paper knife and have the enclosed slip of writing engraved on it in facsimile.[1]

Your own present will come to you direct from Paris. Please like it very much. The man swore to send it to you in time for Christmas. And here are my best Christmas wishes, my dear.

L.

P.S. We go across to Nice for Christmas week. Hotel Splendide is, I am afraid, the address.

JOHN LINDSAY FROME TO ALGERNON DAMP

(Telegram)

Please send name and address of new tobacco. Not for me but pater. Still consider conduct low. Glasses here. You have my putter too. Please return at once.

FROME

[1] The enclosure was Boswell's record of Mr. Edwards' confession of failure to Dr. Johnson: "I have tried too, in my time, to be a philosopher; but, I don't know how, cheerfulness was always breaking in."

E. V. L.

A LETTER TO A LITTLE GIRL

ALGERNON DAMP TO JOHN LINDSAY FROME

(Telegram)

Oblivion Mixture 41 Cork Street. Keep opinion to yourself. Have enough to worry me. Life blank.

DAMP

LYNN HARBERTON TO JOAN ARUNDEL THE YOUNGEST DAUGHTER OF GURNEY ARUNDEL, SQUIRE OF WINFIELD

VILLA DELACROIX
ALGIERS

MY DEAR JOAN,

I believe I said I would write to you directly I got here, and I have been here for weeks and weeks and have written not a word. But I cannot let Father Christmas find me with a broken promise to a little girl on my conscience, or he will be too angry with me. A broken promise to a great man in riding breeches, like your father, for example, wouldn't matter, or a broken promise to a lady in a long rustling silk dress, like your mother on Christmas night, wouldn't matter, because they happen every day; but a broken promise to a little girl, even a little girl who sometimes bites her nails and doesn't like rice pudding—that would be awful.

I don't suppose any two places could be more unlike each other than Winfield and Algiers. To begin

with, here there is the sea. My bedroom looks over the sea. It is quite blue—much bluer than your best sash. Then there are the people. They are browny-black—much browny-blacker even than some little girls' hands can be. I don't say that there are no black people in Winfield; but that is a matter of "What, no soap?" and here the people are black by nature. Of course there are many white ones—English and French—but the natives are black, with beautiful white linen clothes. I go into the market every day for a little while just to see the costumes.

Next there is the weather. Here we have a strong sun all day and many of us wear blue spectacles to rest our eyes from the glare: you are perhaps skating on the Long Pond, or snowballing each other and poor Tibbles (it's a great shame to snowball Tibbles just because he is a little bit odd, and yet tempting, I suppose, and it's true that he likes it when you do it). I don't know what would happen if I took a pair of skates into the market here: there would be a crowd round them in no time, just as there is in London when a horse falls, or as there would be in Rudstone market-place next Thursday if your father blacked his face and went to it in an Arab turban. By the way, why shouldn't he? I think I will bring home a turban with me when I come. (O, let it be soon!) Or a fez. I think a fez would suit his curious style of beauty.

One great disappointment I have had. You remember "My beautiful, my beautiful," the poem

about the Arab steed? Well, I remember it too, and all my life have wanted to see an Arab steed and pat it and admire it and gaze into its mild and understanding eye; but the Arab steeds here are just as poor and lean and uninteresting as they can be—almost like the caravan horses of the gipsies that your father, the old Tory, tries so hard to keep off the Common, and (I am glad to say) can't. You may tell him if you like that I am giving careful particulars of the position of the Common (and his chicken yard) to a number of Arabs here who think of emigrating to England and taking up the gipsy business.

Another difference between Winfield and Algiers is that here there is no Christmas, except for the French and English visitors. The religion here is Mahometan, which means that Christmas Day is no different from any other day. The pretty story of the Star and the Three Kings, and the little Christ being born in the stable of Bethlehem all among the cattle and horses, has no meaning here at all, nor anywhere in this huge continent of Africa, or even Asia, except where missionaries have carried it. These people worship a great soldier named Mahomet, who was very wise and knew all about the nature of men and women, but whose birth is not celebrated by cards and presents at all. I think it is much prettier when a religion begins with a baby and has presents in it at Christmas. The baby makes a children's festival like Christmas so natural. But

here, and in the East generally, children are children for a very short time, and many girls are married before they are as old as you.

Another difference between Algiers and Winfield is that there is no Job. There are public gardens, but no garden like mine or yours, with thrushes and titmice and crusty old gardeners. I miss Job horribly. But then I believe I miss everything horribly, even your disrespectful ways. Will you never realise that I am quite a venerable old man?

I am very lazy here. I will tell you what I do. I am awakened by Yussuf coming into the room with coffee. Yussuf is an Arab boy, who had a tremendous idea of going to England to be happy as a footman there, until I told him about the horrid nature of the little English girl and the kind of life she leads her nurse and her uncles, and now he is wiser and does not want to go at all. Then I go for a short walk on what Dr. Mitchell calls an empty stummick, and afterwards have some breakfast, which is more coffee and a roll and some fruit, and then perhaps I write a little (but no one will read it), and then I go to the market, and look in at a Club where there are men playing Bridge, and glance at the papers, and then it is time for lunch, and after lunch I read and talk to my brother and sister and perhaps walk out again; and then the sun sets, and then it is time for dinner, and so we get through the day.

There are a few children here that I know, all of whom can talk French better than you ever will, but

that I fancy is because they are French children. They call me Monsieur Arbertong, which is rather pretty I think, although when Mr. Weedon at the Post Office drops my "H," I shiver. How is that? "Lynn" they call "Lean," which was appropriate enough once, but now that I am doing nothing but be lazy is getting to be horribly wrong.

Now I must stop. You ought to have this letter just before Christmas Day, and at the same time a parcel will I hope come to you from London, where Miss Graham is doing my shopping for me. I shan't tell you what I am sending you for a present, because that spoils the excitement, but I will give you a hint by writing down three pieces of advice and you can guess which of them applies to it.

1. Don't ever forget to feed it.
2. Be sure it is only the best butter.
3. Don't turn the handle too fast.

Give every one my love and a Christmas message in very good French.

Your loving uncle
LEAN ARBERTONG

P.S. Take care that it is very good French, or I shall be very cross. I am sure to hear about it.

LYNN HARBERTON TO EDITH GRAHAM

HOTEL SPLENDIDE
NICE

MY DEAR CHILD,

We came over here for Christmas, and whether to go back I have not yet decided. Probably I shall, as my brother and sister seem to want me.

The concierge here has the most charming little daughter, Gigi, and she came in last evening after dinner to tell us all about her Christmas presents. Le P'tit Jesus, she said, had been very kind; he had sent her a little pair of shoes. Red shoes, just what she wanted. But, oh dear! when she came to try them on they were too small. Gigi's mother, however, soon put the matter right. She took the shoes, and went to Le P'tit Jesus with them, and asked him to change them. And Le P'tit Jesus did it at once, made no trouble about it at all. Look!—and Gigi drew back her frock that we might see this wonderful present.

I thought of this little scene as I came out of the church this morning. Just inside the door is a figure of the Magdalen with this beautiful inscription beneath: "Douce avocate des pécheurs penitents"; and as I came out I was confronted by a lofty and very impressive Calvary. Under the freakish law of association which governs minds, my thoughts flew

to Gigi, and I asked myself, Since it is Le P'tit Jesus who sends the presents, and the Magdalen who makes sweet intercession for sinners, what place in the Latin countries does the crucified Christ hold? The infant Jesus on his mother's breast is familiar to every one: he gives red shoes to Gigi, and there is not a child but has a tenderness for him; but how do the children bridge the gulf between the baby in Mary's arms and this wan figure on the Cross? Or do they bridge it at all?

Christ, indeed, I imagine, though Calvarys abound, has never been the real friend of the Latin races. It is to a woman that they carry their troubles, to Mary the Mother, or to that other Mary. This is a very human exchange, very natural to nations in whom the child persists so much longer than with us.

Yours

L. H.

DENNIS ALBOURNE TO EDITH GRAHAM

SEACOMBE, DEVONSHIRE

DEAR MISS GRAHAM,

I found a charming poem about St. Martin (who has always been one of my favourites among the saints) in a French paper this morning, signed Edmond Héracourt, and I tried my hand at a trans-

lation. I wonder if you will like it. It is seasonable anyway—or should be, but the weather here is like midsummer.

CHARITY

Because so bitter was the rain,
Saint Martin tore his cloak in twain,
  And gave the beggar half of it
To cover him and ease his pain.

But being now himself ill clad,
The Saint's own case no less was sad.
  So piteously cold the night;
Though glad at heart he was, right glad.

Thus, singing, on his way he passed,
While Satan, grim and overcast,
  Vowing the Saint should rue his deed
Released the cruel Northern blast.

Away it sprang with shriek and roar,
And buffeted the Saint full sore,
  Yet never wished he for his cloak;
So Satan bade the deluge pour.

Huge hail-stones joined in the attack,
And dealt Saint Martin many a thwack,
  "My poor old head!" he smiling said,
Yet never wished his cape were back.

"He must, he shall," cried Satan, "know
Regret for such an act," and lo,
  E'en as he spoke the world was dark
With fog and frost and whirling snow.

Saint Martin, struggling toward his goal,
Mused thoughtfully, "Poor soul! poor
  What use to him was half a cloak?
I should have given him the whole."

The cold grew terrible to bear,
The birds fell frozen in the air:
"Fall thou," said Satan, "on the ice,
Fall thou asleep, and perish there."

He fell, and slept, despite the storm,
And dreamed he saw the Christ Child's form
Wrapped in the half the beggar took,
And seeing Him, was warm, so warm.

Dear Miss Graham, that is my Christmas present to you, with the best wishes in the world.

Yours sincerely

DENNIS ALBOURNE

EDITH GRAHAM TO LYNN HARBERTON

17A KENSINGTON SQUARE W.
DECEMBER 25, 1905

MY DEAR GUARDIAN,

It is the most beautiful pendant I ever saw. How could you be so extravagant! Sir Herbert is amazed at you. "I never thought he had such taste," he said, "or the sense to go to Cartier's." So you ought to be very happy—to have made me so proud and pleased that I don't know what to do, and to have astonished a man of the world like your brother. I had some other presents, but none gave me such pleasure as this. Mrs. Pink's was a set of Jane Austen. I do so hope you liked the book I

sent you. You are such a difficult person to give a present to.

Yours so happily
EDITH

JOHN LINDSAY FROME TO EDITH GRAHAM

THE RECTORY
WINFIELD

MY DEAR EDITH,

I am most awfully floored by hearing from Algy that he has been to see you and has asked you a very important question. I am most frightfully sorry to think that it was through me that you should have got to know Damp, and that any friend of mine should do such a low thing as to propose to any one like that, when he knew all along that—I mean before he really knew you at all or had any right to. But I suppose it did not matter as you said no so quickly.

You see, Edith, I always hoped that I might one day be able to ask you to marry me, and it is awful to feel now that I have nothing to offer you at all. I don't even know what I am going to do, and my allowance is just no good at all. Of course I can't ask you to wait for me. It would be jolly mean to do so. And I haven't made a decent meal for days. I don't care for anything at all except looking after

Deuce. And there's nothing to look forward to at Oxford either, for I don't see how I can ever speak to Algy again after what he's done, and he is the only man I know who has a motor.

It's the first time he has ever been a bounder.

Well, I won't bother you any more with this scrawl.

Your devoted friend

JACK FROME

JOHN LINDSAY FROME TO ALGERNON DAMP

(Telegram)

Where's my putter. My life blank too. No future. Writing E. G. what I think of you. Post putter at once. Can't play with pater's.

FROME

ALGERNON DAMP TO JOHN LINDSAY FROME

(Telegram)

Know nothing of putter and care less. Jolly low trick write Miss G. about me. Thought you gentleman once.

DAMP

EDITH GRAHAM TO JOHN LINDSAY FROME

17A KENSINGTON SQUARE W.

MY POOR JACK,

You must not be unhappy. Why do you all think of nothing but marrying? We used to be so jolly together, and now you are spoiling it. In any case I couldn't let you marry me, because I am years older, and wives must not be older than their husbands. Don't think about it any more but begin to eat again and make it up with Mr. Damp at once, because he has done no harm. Surely you know the saying "It's all fair in love and war." Don't ever call him a bounder: he was most considerate and polite. So if I were you I should ask myself to his house for a few days, and go for some good rides, and perhaps you and I could go to a matinée together. And please think of me always as your affectionate friend

EDITH GRAHAM

JOHN LINDSAY FROME TO ALGERNON DAMP

(Telegram)

Quite see your position. Sorry so blind before. May I come January for week. Let dead past bury dead. Have clinking new putter.

FROME

ALGERNON DAMP TO JOHN LINDSAY FROME

(Telegram)

Yes if really sympathetic. Must have sympathy. Heart broken. Buying new car a ripper. Come fetch you if you like.

DAMP

JOHN LINDSAY FROME TO EDITH GRAHAM

THE RECTORY
WINFIELD

MY VERY DEAR EDITH,

Thank you awfully for your perfectly ripping letter. I telegraphed to Algy at once, and it is all right, and I am getting quite a good pecker again. I won't worry you any more, but I will look on you as the rippingest sister that any man ever had.

Yours always

JACK

LYNN HARBERTON TO EDITH GRAHAM

HOTEL SPLENDIDE
NICE

MY DEAR CHILD,

You could not have sent me a more congenial present than *Idlehurst*; but I can't think how I

could have missed it so long. It seems to have been out some time. I like it better than anything new I can remember for many years. The older I get, the more I feel that this is the only kind of book that one ought to write—except biography. I suppose the only literary tasks for the reflective man are biography and autobiography.

But I doubt if you should have sent it to me if you really want me to stay in exile. It has brought Winfield so near again, and if Winfield is near I must go back.

> That is my home of love. If I have strayed,
> Like one that wanders I return again.

And yet is it my home of love? It was once; but now, for all its beckoning, I do not see the windows lighted as warmly as I could have wished, or the door open, or the right figure of welcome on the step.

Well, I get maudlin here, sentimental and very old. You have no idea how old I am. I walk on crutches and children mock my grey hairs. At least that is what I imagine they are doing for I cannot understand their southern slang. How can I take an interest in slang at eighty-five? And yet according to any one else's computation I am only thirty-seven and a half, and Sir Bingley Whipple, M.P., who is staying in this hotel, assured me yesterday that I had the ball at my feet. He seems to have caught sight of my name in *The Times* Supplement, with

suitable adjectives affixed. I believe sometimes that reviews are written solely in the interests of the diner-out.

That is rather a joke about Herbert and Cartier. I have noticed that few things so irritate those who set up to know everything as the discovery that a friend has some gift the existence of which they had never suspected. Such surprises come from underrating the foe, which is at the bottom of many of the mistakes in life as well as in war. Herbert is a very wise man, but he will commit the error of despising others, and the very instant that one begins to despise one ceases to understand. But he is a dear fellow.

Good-night

L.

DENNIS ALBOURNE TO EDITH GRAHAM

8 Hare Court
The Temple

My dear Miss Graham,

I am going away to walk for a week or so to get some health into me. Shall I bore you if I write a letter now and then about the day's adventures? Only to Wiltshire. Another man will be with me part of the time, I think, and with him a dog, a spaniel, so there will be company. I am very much

perplexed about one thing and another, and nothing but the open air can help me. Please tell Mrs. Pink.

Yours sincerely

D A

ORME RODWELL TO EDITH GRAHAM

400 QUEEN ANNE'S MANSIONS
S.W.

MY DEAR LADY,

You are at once so sensible and sensitive that you probably divined the contents of this letter before you broke the seal. It is too late in the world's history for a man and woman of our intelligence to waste time over the conventional machinery of courtship. We are too civilised, you and I. And so I say briefly and directly, will you be my wife?

I have not much to offer you; but I have expectations, and it's not in nature that my aunt Mrs. Pink, whose heir I have every reason to believe I shall be, can live very much longer. At present I am poor, but I have many plans, including the scenario of a comedy which cannot, I am told by discerning friends, fail to be a great success; and though to make money by the efforts of mummers is not an ideal way, yet no one but a fool despises money or refuses it in whatever guise it may arrive.

I have never met a woman who seemed to me so

full of instinct as yourself, and there is no quality more to be prized in your sex. A witty woman is anathema to me, a beautiful woman (not that you are not beautiful, but beauty is secondary with you) is a snare, but a wise woman with charm is perfection.

I believe, after long consideration and much quiet and amused observation of the world, that there is no rock on which to build the fragile edifice which we call marriage sounder than mutual admiration. Passion quickly dies and may be succeeded by ennui, but the mutual admiration of intellect and instinct is trustworthy and will endure. These gifts we both have. I can bring poetry and fancy and, I venture to think, wit into our life ; you, your wonderful womanliness. My sense of humour fortified by your instinct should be of the greatest value on the stage. The success of Shaw's facetiousness is an indication of how little an audience really wants or understands of the best ; but we will educate them, you and I.

May I ask for a telegraphic reply to this letter. I shall, as one says, be all on fire until I hear from you.

Your admiring ~~servant~~ slave

ORME RODWELL

EDITH GRAHAM TO ORME RODWELL

(Telegram)

Quite impossible. GRAHAM

EDITH GRAHAM TO LYNN HARBERTON

17A KENSINGTON SQUARE W.

DEAR GUARDIAN,

I hasten to tell you that you were quite right about Mr. Rodwell. His proposal came this morning, by the first post, on very superior note paper. I don't think I ought to send you the letter, but I don't think there is any harm in quoting a sentence or two of it. "It is too late in the world's history for a man and woman of our intelligence to waste time over the conventional machinery of courtship." And "My sense of humour fortified by your instinct should be of the greatest value on the stage"—for he wants to be a dramatist. Comedy, of course. (It is very odd, but all the people in London talk about their sense of humour. You may shout at any man just now that he has no moral sense, and he will be delighted and purr; but if you only whisper that he is deficient in a sense of humour his face goes black with rage.) But the worst thing in Mr. Rodwell's letter was his suggestion that he would be rich when

Mrs. Pink dies, and that she cannot last long. He asked for a telegraphic reply and I sent him one. So there is another episode closed.

We have lost Mr. Albourne for a time. He has been a good deal run down lately through a bad cough and doing too much, and possibly worry of some kind, and has gone away on a walking tour. He is not at all strong—in fact very frail, I think, and has probably no idea how to take care of himself.

There is no other news.

Good-night

EDITH

SIR HERBERT ROYCE TO DENNIS ALBOURNE

MORTON'S HOTEL
JERMYN STREET

DEAR ALBOURNE,

I am sorry to hear you are seedy. Stay away as long as you can and take things as easily as you can. If you are hard up, you might allow me to be your banker: it's so long since I lent any one any money that I begin to want to do so again, just to know again what usury feels like.

Why don't you meditate upon a book of personal irresponsible travel, while you walk? You could do it, I think, and it wants doing. Borrow is, of course,

the man. When I was last in Africa, I had only five books with me, and one was *Lavengro*. Boswell was another, Palgrave's *Golden Treasury* another, *The Egoist* another and Shakespeare, in vilely small print, the last, or first. There can never be another Borrow, but there may still be fine books of the road. Difficulties of course are not few. Not only are the conditions of existence becoming more formal, and such impulses as drove Borrow out into the world rarer and more difficult to obey, but the globe itself is contracting. The wider world is known and docketed, and every English road that one would turn down has just had its mystery and freshness stolen from it by some clay-souled motorist. The footpaths remain, it is true, but where is the road? The footpath is for shy moods, the road for romance. So long as motorists rush in where men of temperament are meditating setting a tentative foot, so long will the spirit of *Lavengro* be mute. I cannot imagine Borrow setting out with his knapsack and stick today: indeed, I cannot imagine Borrow living in this day at all. He seems to me to belong to a more remote past than many an earlier man—than Dryden and Pope, for example. As for Horace Walpole, one might meet him any day; but Borrow is prehistoric.

A large part of the world, of course, still remains but one can no longer be the first to travel in it. To be the first—I believe that much of the secret lies there. Your romantic wanderer is such a shy bird.

so easily daunted, that often if he can't be the first he won't play at all.

The spirit of Borrow is growing increasingly rare too: his independence, his rebelliousness, his carelessness of comforts, his disregard of to-morrow. He had no ties, or at any rate he allowed no ties to hamper him. English literature has no other author so free and lawless. The ordinary writer of a book of travel to-day knows when he will start, where he is going, and when he must return. Other people's holidays (that dull consideration) may depend on his return. Borrow's way was the right way: to throw, as it were, the laces over one's boot's neck. But who does it now? Who could do it for more than a few days? I can, it is true; but then I can't write. The words *Poste restante* never entered into Borrow's life, whereas most modern wanderers are riveted to them.

Mr. Meredith, I believe, could have written a wonderful first-person-singular romance of the road, as distinct in its way as *Lavengro*, if he had wanted to. Both men are intellectual aristocrats; both are humorists and lovers of the green earth; both are fascinated by the human comedy. But that is the end of the resemblance. Borrow had no Olympian wit; no delight in the comic drama of sex and poor human nature's disasters; no eye for a Countess or a Clara Middleton; no time to be bothered by the doubts of a Willoughby. Mr. Meredith, had he lacked these engaging interests (but it is not of course

really thinkable), would have written, I fancy, only romances of adventurers. *Evan Harrington* is often no more: the humours of the road are thick in it. *Harry Richmond*, when Harry is among gipsies and in the German principality with his sublime father, is within hailing distance of *Lavengro*. Through the books of both blows a royal wind. Literary artists can produce atmosphere; but only the great writers can create a gale.

I wish Mr. Meredith had given us even some first-person-singular travels of his own. How good they would be! He certainly could have written the best go-as-you-please narrative of romantic humours of any one of our time; and Stevenson, I imagine, the next. Stevenson, indeed, did it in a small way twice—in his *Inland Voyage*, and better still in his *Travels with a Donkey*; but he did not dip far enough in the business, and he was too civilised, too much the literary artist. But the *Travels with a Donkey* will be read, I always think, as long as anything its author wrote; much longer than his stories.

I wish that Hazlitt had been in a position to wander, and write about it. He would not have been the ideal traveller—he carried too many prejudices and heats in his knapsack—but he would have been a very readable one. What sinewy records would have come from his pen, of towns and scenery, of bagmen and innkeepers! Cobbett, who was not unlike Hazlitt in many respects, might, had he taken agriculture and politics a little less

seriously, have made the *Rural Rides* a vastly fine thing. And it is a thousand pities that Arthur Young, with all his instinct for travel and his opportunities, had so few juices. He actually calls the French a dull people—the French of the country, too!

The nearest modern thing to Borrow that I know, but totally distinct, and owing, I am convinced, nothing to it—is Hudson's *Purple Land*. You know this, I expect: if not, you should read it at once. It is the real thing.

Let me hear how you get on, and that you grow stronger.

Yours sincerely
HERBERT ROYCE

JOAN ARUNDEL TO LYNN HARBERTON

LEE PARK
WINGFIELD

DEAR UNCLE LYNN,

I hope you are quite well. Thank you for your splendid long letter. We all miss you very much, and Edith too, and Phyllis and I both think that the nicest thing for you to do would be to marry Edith and then she would come back from London and we should all be happy again. Please do, dear Uncle Lynn. I am sure Edith would.

Your loving niece
JOAN ARUNDEL

P.S. Please write again because Cyril wants the stamp.

ANNIE HARBERTON TO CYNTHIA HYDE

VILLA DELACROIX
ALGIERS

DEAR CYNTHIA,

We are more than a little troubled about my brother Lynn. He mopes and broods and wants to go home, and yet does not go home, and tries to write a little and does not write. I should put his unsettlement down to the charge of the literary temperament were it not for a word or two which he lets fall now and then, and his feverish interest in the arrival of letters. As the only person who writes to him is Miss Graham, it is not difficult to put two and two together. But is the answer four? I mean does she love him too? This is what we want to know.

Poor Lynn is so diffident, and lacking in initiative, and self-effacing, that he is quite capable out of some foolish Quixotic whim of standing by and allowing his life to be spoiled. I should not describe him as a marrying man; but at the same time he would make a very good husband in the hands of the right woman. We believe Miss Graham to be right, and at any rate he has known her long enough not to

make any foolish mistake about his own feelings, except that middle-aged men can be quite as foolish as young and old ones. I don't know what you can do in this matter, but you at any rate are on the spot and you know Edith and are in her confidence—as much I suppose as any one ever is in the confidence of a young woman. Won't you let me have a line saying what you think about it, just instinctively?

Yours sincerely
ANNIE HARBERTON

DENNIS ALBOURNE TO EDITH GRAHAM

THE BEAR
DEVIZES

MY DEAR MISS GRAHAM,

I must tell you of a splendid thing which happened to Stunt (my friend's dog)—or rather which did not happen to Stunt. It was at Lambourne, in Berkshire, where we had walked from Wantage—along the Icknield Way as far as the White Horse. The incident is a perfect example of the unexpected, of surprise.

Lambourne is in Berkshire, a quiet village entirely surrounded by racehorses. We came to the inn at a reasonable hour, descending from White Horse Hill in a storm of wind and rain. My friend gave

Stunt to the ostler and saw that he was made comfortable with straw and water, and soon we were before a good dinner and were telling the landlord to be sure to let the dog be well fed too.

And here the surprise begins. The landlord, it seems, forgot all about Stunt until he was shutting up his house at midnight, long after we were asleep. He then, being a humane man, hastened to mix a mess of food and take it out to the dog with many apologies. When, however, he reached the stables, of which there are many, he could not find him; either he overlooked the stall altogether or Stunt was under the straw too tired to rouse himself. This put the good man into a fright. "The dog," he told himself, "mad for food, has broken his chain and run away. The gentleman will be furious; very likely he will run me through. What shall I do? What shall I do?" So we may figure him soliloquising, when his heart gave a bound of delight as he caught sight of a dog furtively moving in the shadow of the house, near the rubbish heap. This, I may say at once, was not Stunt, but an immoral predatory dog of the village, who, although of respectable appearance and wearing a collar, was yet of lurching and thievish tendencies and bad conscience, and had come to see what he could steal. Judge, then, of his astonishment and dismay when he found himself wooed with soft words, led to a warm and comfortable stable, coaxed gently into the straw, and then fed with a generous dish of meat and biscuit and gravy.

I doubt if the history of surprise holds a better example. To come as a thief in the night, and find oneself being placed in the seat of respect—that is an experience which falls to few of us.

The next morning, it is true, saw justice done, with the arrival of the ostler in a pair of heavy boots ; but even then the honours remained with the dog, for the landlord did not see it kicked out, but only running for its life afterwards, and conceiving it to be our dog again escaping, gave personal chase (although a corpulent fellow) for some fifty yards or so, calling on the passers-by for help. He then abandoned the pursuit, and after a short interview with the ostler assumed an air of dignity which promised ill for that night-prowler when next it wandered near his foot.

Yours

D. A.

LYNN HARBERTON TO EDITH GRAHAM

(Fragment)

What you say of this new chatter about the sense of humour is very interesting. I had noticed the subject growing in the papers. But humorists leave it alone, just as healthy people do not talk about their health. Show me a man who claims to possess a sense of humour and I will show you a bore.

DERMOT HYDE TO HIS MOTHER CYNTHIA HYDE

c/o Mrs. Pink
17A Kensington Square W.

My dear Mother,

This is an awfully decent house to stay in. Miss Graham and I have made a theatre and last night we had a performence. Aunt Victoria, Sir Herbert Royce and Mr. Conran and the servants were the audience. We played a scene in the life of Sir Herbert, where he killed the lion before it killed him. Miss Graham painted the scenery, which was cheifly sunset in Africa, all red, with palm trees. There was no talk in this scene, only roaring. Miss Graham worked the lion and I worked Sir Herbert, and I did the roaring. It was very sucessful.

Then we did a scene in the life of Mr. Conran, with talking. I wrote it myself. In the first act he and Aunt Victoria walking together under an umberella in London meet a beggar. It was really the same figure that had been Sir Herbert, only with rags and dirt on it. The beggar asked them for money, and Aunt Victoria was going to give him some, but Mr. Conran said in a terrible firm voice "No, Madam. It cannot be. It cannot be. I smell an imposter." Miss Graham read the words while I moved the figures. Then the beggar, who was Irish, with a broge which Miss Graham did awfully decently, told Mr. Conran he was a mean

sneak and he would go to the suspicous man's hell, and Aunt Victoria said "No, No! No, No!", but Mr. Conran said he would chance it and asked the beggar's name and address. The beggar ran off and that was the end of Act I.

In Act II somehow or other Mr. Conran had discovered the beggar's address, and the scene is his drawing-room, where he is eating a most tremendous whack and drinking expensive champangs, a new bottle every minute, when Mr. Conran and a policeman suddenly come in and take him to prison. In the third act Aunt Victoria disguised as a gaoler's daughter visits him and gives him money and a ticket of leave.

To-morrow I am going to the Natural History Museum to see the protective coloured birds and things. Please don't let me come home yet.

I am your affectionate son

DERMOT HYDE

P.S. I have told Miss Graham that you and father call her the Innocent Spinx.

EDITH GRAHAM TO GWENDOLEN FROME

17A KENSINGTON SQUARE W.

MY DEAR GWEN,

Mrs. Pink asks me to say she would be very glad if you would come here for a week's visit, when Jack comes down to stay with Mr. Damp. I hope

you will. I will give you as much time as I can and every afternoon.

Yours always
EDITH

MISS FASE TO EDITH GRAHAM

THE LAURELS
GRANGE-OVER-SANDS

MY DEAR EDITH,

I write to you to know if you will be so good as to work some little thing for our church bazaar, where I have a stall with two other ladies, Miss Cole, whom I daresay you will remember as my neighbour, at The Laburnums, on the other side to Miss Passmore, and a very pleasant neighbour too, except for a little dog that will bark in the night and ought to be treated with more severity, and Mrs. Bamside-Block, the widow of the late vicar, who still lives on here to be near her husband's grave, which is a very handsome one, in Aberdeen granite, with an inscription from her own pen that some of the parishioners think rather too extreme in its praise, but which only a very cultivated and well-read woman could have written. The Blocks are indeed a very old and gifted family, one of the oldest in England I believe; but of course that does not really matter because Mrs. Bamside-Block would have taken the name from her husband. She was herself I believe a Miss Birdie, but I know very little about her except that

her father invented something of world-wide fame but I forget what it was—either a patent wire-mattress, I think, or perhaps it was a new method of filing bills. Anyhow his daughter is a clever woman and quite the intellectual leader here among our regular residents. She goes to the Oxford Summer meeting of the University Extension movement every summer, and Mr. Churton Collins himself once stayed in her house here and was most entertaining, she told me afterwards, on the subject of the Merstham tunnel murder and coincidences in general, keeping them up till nearly midnight.

Of course, my dear, I know you are very busy most of the day, but I thought you might have a little time to yourself after lunch and in the evening, and I know it would be a pleasure to you to work something for our church. The vicar is such a dear hardworking man, with a constant thorn in the side in the shape of a thriftless son who has never done anything but waste his time and his father's money since he left Oxford, and we want little simple useful things such as egg coseys, although I doubt if there is any way of keeping an egg hot except in hot water, and that of course makes it hard even although you crack the top, or kettle holders, or doyleys, or table centres, or night-dress bags, or toilets, or watch pockets. But of course dear if you are too busy you must not trouble at all.

I must now stop if I am to catch the post.

Your loving

AUNT CHARLOTTE

P.S. From what you have told me of Mrs. Pink I fear it is useless to ask her for any help except perhaps a few old things for the Rummage Sale. We should be glad of anything we could get, and it is so much pleasanter of course to know something of the people who wore the clothes before they were left off. I am sure we could feel quite safe with anything of Mrs. Pink's.

CYNTHIA HYDE TO ANNIE HARBERTON

THE CORNER HOUSE
LEATHERHEAD

MY DEAR ANNIE,

You ask a very difficult thing. Edith is at once so frank and so secretive; but then, as you say, they all are. We all are. I suppose it is part of our armour, and Heaven knows some of us want all the armour we can get. Of one thing I am certain, and that is all in your favour—no one else has won any place in her heart. My aunt's house is beginning to be overrun with men with souls and temperaments and futures, and Edith listens to them all, and they all go away idealising and idolising her; but although she has had a proposal or two already, I feel as sure as I can be that she does not love one of them, not even the ugliest or least suitable. Still you never

can tell with these quiet ones. But I am going to begin to find out. I am going to be as cunning as a serpent and discover everything. When one is nearing forty one is entitled to do a little match-making.

The best of them all is Sir Herbert Royce, whom I love. How he feels about Edith I can only guess, but he is fifty, just twice her age, and that is too much. I was reading a French book the other day which says that a wife should be half her husband's age with seven years added: rather a nice idea, I think. (It makes me too old for Sir Herbert though.) I have caught him looking at Edith rather intently now and then, and he takes her to the theatre. But I am afraid she is too young to see his great merits as I can. I think he is a little bit of a bully (although he is your half-brother), and that is rather attractive.

Yours sincerely
CYNTHIA HYDE

DENNIS ALBOURNE TO EDITH GRAHAM

THE NORFOLK ARMS
ARUNDEL

MY DEAR MISS GRAHAM,

My friend went to London this morning, so I have been alone. I have just written these lines in commemoration of an incident of the day.

LISTENER'S LURE

As I walked over the Common,
All in the sweet cool air,
The sky was a benediction
And everything was fair,
Till I saw that most un-christian sight
A clergyman debonair
Lolling back on the cushions
Of a dashing carriage and pair.

And all the joy of the morning
Suddenly passed away,
The sky that had been so friendly
Turned to a chilling grey,
And not till a swearing gipsy I met,
Helping his child to play,
Could I put together the pieces
And mend the broken day.

Few poems are so truthful as this. I have set down exactly what occurred; but I don't say that I have carried the moral quite far enough.

Yours
D. A.

GWENDOLEN FROME TO MRS. FROME

17A KENSINGTON SQUARE W.

MY DEAR MOTHIE,

I am here all right, although it was no joke coming from St. Pancras. We rushed into a howling fog at Kentish Town and were two hours getting across London in a cab. It is an awfully nice house

and Mrs. Pink is a perfect dear. Edith is a most wonderful manager, everything seems to be done by her. What Mrs. Pink will do when Mr. Harberton wants her again I can't imagine. Last night we were very quiet, but this evening I am going to the theatre with Jack and his friend Mr. Damp and in the afternoon to a picture gallery with Edith. She is out now with Mrs. Pink, and I am writing in my room, which looks out on the square.

No more now, except love.

Your loving

G.

DENNIS ALBOURNE TO EDITH GRAHAM

THE WOOD'S EDGE
NEWTIMBER, SUSSEX

MY DEAR MISS GRAHAM,

I have had a very interesting experience. I have become a Dowser. A Dowser is not a member of a new religion, tell Mrs. Pink, but a water-diviner, one who detects the presence of springs with a divining rod.

I came upon the Ortons, on Saturday morning, wild with excitement over the approaching visit of the Dowser, the old well having gone dry or bad, and a new one being imperative. I will tell you the whole story faithfully, because it is really remarkable,

and brings me nearer to magic than I ever expected or hoped my very materialistic nature could approach.

At eleven o'clock the Dowser, Mr. Partridge, came —a large, heavy man, with a weak but kindly mouth, soft eyes, a beard, and a pocket bulging with hazel twigs : nothing of witchcraft about him. We crowded round — a dozen of us, counting the children — and worshipped, and the wizard, very naturally, was not a little embarrassed. However, he bade us good morning, and gathering the universe into a glance, pronounced it a favourable day. The sun shone, and the air was clean and fresh, though there was no wind. Then he looked at the field more narrowly, and, indicating the part where a spring was most likely to be found, led the way. We followed. Of those of us who were grown up, I might here mention that two were wholly sceptics and wishful to remain so, and three were unbelievers and hopeful of conversion. I count myself among the three.

Mr. Partridge began by selecting from his store one of the stouter rods, the rod being in reality a forked twig of hazel in the shape of a long letter "V." After cherishing it in his hands for a few moments, he grasped both ends tightly, his palms being upwards, his arms pressed against his sides, and the point of the "V" thrust outwards horizontally, at right angles to his body. He then walked slowly over the grass, gazing intently upon the tip of the twig, and taking short steps. Orton, the chief of the sceptics,

declares that the diviner's lips were moving as though in the repetition of some incantation. But I did not observe that, although I was watching him —as were all of us—most intently.

At about the seventh step the point of the rod began to rise in his hands, at the next step it became quite vertical; thus remaining for some two yards, after which it fell again. A few paces farther the diviner turned round and began to walk back over the same ground, and as he did so the rod rose at the precise spot where it had fallen on his first passage, grew upright again, and fell at the place where it had first risen. "There's a spring here," said Mr. Partridge quietly. We looked at each other a little puzzled. Nothing was, of course, proved, but an uncanny influence seemed to be stirring. The wizard tried with another, a finer twig, which he held with his finger tips. The results were the same, except that this rod seemed more subtly susceptible. "Now I am on the spring," he said, as the twig began to rise; "Now I am off it," as the twig was again depressed.

Mr. Partridge then walked off to trace the course of the stream under the grass, and we closed into a noisy group to discuss the wonder—or the fraud. Tests were devised. Orton was for blindfolding; Bridges, Orton's brother-in-law, after showing how a V-shaped twig may be mechanically raised by pressure, was for holding the wizard's hands, or fixing them apart with a bar of wood. When Mr.

Partridge came back he was told of our plans, and laughingly assented. He pretended to no magic, he assured us: he was as much mystified as we were; but there was the fact! During several years' practice at divination, he had never made a mistake yet, and many wells had been sunk on the evidence of the rod. An old Sussex villager first led him to try his hand, and he soon became peculiarly sensitive. His whole body told him when he was over water; his arms became numb, and, after an hour's seeking he was tired out, exhausted. To show us how powerful was this force, he chose another twig, and, gripping it tightly, held it over the spring, saying that with all his might he would strive to repress it. The twig struggled and kicked in his grasp, and in its determination to rise broke on both sides, while the sweat stood out on the wizard's forehead. The tests were then applied, and in every case the rod triumphed.

By this time the party was divided into factions. The two sceptics were becoming unpopular. Why, they were asked, if he makes no money out of it, and seeks no fame—for modesty and a retiring disposition were patent in the man—why should he wish to deceive? Where is the use of employing fraud? To which the answer was that the reasons for imposture are often obscure, and, to the honest mind, inadequate.

On Mr. Partridge's return he provided rods for a few of us, but very little success was recorded. At

first I was as much a failure as the rest, although I got the wizard to hold my wrists as I walked, and to adjust the rod in my fingers. He seemed, however, more hopeful than I, and told me to try again carefully, first warming the twig—making it, as it were, a part of myself. I therefore removed from the rest of the party, who were now standing at a spot some distance from the place where water was first detected, and nourished the rod as though it were a wounded bird. Then, holding it lightly in my finger tips, I paced slowly over the grass in the manner of the diviner. I passed the spot where the rod had in his hands begun to rise, without any manifestation, and was becoming again despondent, when precisely in the middle of the stream, as he had judged it, the twig rose. A shiver ran through me, the thing was so unexpected and yet so desired, and, withal, so fraught with mystery. I retraced my steps, and the twig rose again, exactly in the same spot. I had no feeling of numbness but an absolute inability to control the movement of the twig. It rose on every occasion without assistance from me. Then I shut my eyes and approached the place from varying distances, and each time the twig rose at the same spot. From that moment I was a believer in the rod. I could have kissed it.

Satisfied with the experiment, I called the others. The scoffers grew in eloquence, but the Dowser was interested. He watched the twig as I went over the ground again, and he was satisfied. "It rises now,

he explained in answer to my question why it was influenced only in the middle of the stream, "because it is there that the spring is most marked. In a few days," he added, "you ought to become as sensitive as me." I was thrilled with these words: so near Nature's heart, so near! But the scoffers only laughed the more, and to put my success to the test I was dispatched to a far corner of the field, while a new spring was discovered by Mr. Partridge. I was then to be called and shown vaguely the direction in which to walk, and to find the spring if I could. All this was done, and the diviner's twig and my twig tallied. Then it was I who discovered water two hundred yards away, and the diviner who followed. Again the twigs tallied. At this point Bridges weakened a little, and the remaining two unbelievers who wished to become convinced became convinced—convinced, like myself, not that there was water beneath our feet at these spots, though that was, of course, the presumption, but that a certain mysterious force, not human, was at work.

That ended the experiments. The water-diviner was perceptibly fagged, and over a glass of beer he told us stories of the successful wells that had been sunk in the neighbourhood, and the mistakes of other men, which the rod had been, in his hands, the means of rectifying. He ended by repeating his statement that the whole thing was a marvel to him, and advising me to persevere. I mean to. So you see what my destiny is: no more journalism,

no more Fleet Street, but the life of the simple but successful Dowser.

Yours
D. A.

GWENDOLEN FROME TO MRS. FROME

17A KENSINGTON SQUARE W.

DEAREST MOTHIE,

We have been to the theatre twice—once to the St. James's and once to the Imperial. I don't know which I like best, George Waller or Lewis Alexander. I think perhaps George Waller is handsomer, but Lewis Alexander has such a wonderful voice.

I don't know how I shall ever settle down at Winfield again.

I have also been to a motor show with Mr. Damp and Jack. Mr. Damp was very kind, and he asked me my advice as to what car he should buy next and how it should be upholstered. I was never much interested in motor cars before, but I can see the fascination now. Mr. Damp is taking us a long drive to-morrow, as Edith has to be busy. We shall very likely have lunch at Burford Bridge, if it is fine. Mr. Damp's chauffeur is most amusing, but he hardly ever gets a chance to drive at all, what with Mr. Damp and Jack both wanting to. I have a very beautiful illustrated edition of Omar Khayyám, which

I think you will like to see, exactly like one that Edith has.

I enclose picture postcards of George Waller and Lewis Alexander.

With ever so much love

G.

EDITH GRAHAM TO CYNTHIA HYDE

17A KENSINGTON SQUARE W.

DEAR CYNTHIA,

I telegraphed you to come up about Mr. Albourne. Mrs. Pink is in despair, and I thought you were the one soul she would like to talk to about it all. A letter came this morning saying that he is married, and has indeed been married for some time. He does not explain, but there can be very little doubt that his marriage is one of which he is rather ashamed. I expect he was sorry for some girl and married her out of chivalry. He admits he made a great mistake and that they have lived apart for some time and are not likely to do anything else. He meant to keep it all a secret—but says that he has been feeling for some time that he ought to tell Mrs. Pink as he cannot bear any suggestion of false pretences in his dealings with her. Mrs. Pink is very unhappy about it, and so am I. Sir Herbert looked in this afternoon and Mrs. Pink told him all

about it and he went off to find Mr. Albourne and cheer him up by saying that it would make no difference here; but I suppose it must make a little difference. Everything that happens in life always seems to make some little difference. It is one of the sad things that a little change keeps creeping in: nothing ever remains quite the same or can be repeated exactly. I shall be so glad to see you tomorrow.

Yours
EDITH

SIR HERBERT ROYCE TO LYNN HARBERTON

MORTON'S HOTEL
JERMYN STREET

DEAR LYNN,

Circumstances over which we have no control have settled the Albourne difficulty. The young fool turns out to be married already. He married his landlady's daughter, that astute person having discerned the ass beneath the poet's skin and played her cards accordingly. Or so I deduce from Albourne's story. He saw quickly that he had been duped, but it was then too late; and then he met with Edith and for a while allowed himself to enjoy the illusion of being free and her lover. In such men conscience never dies, it is only now and then

very sleepy; and waking up one day recently, Albourne's insisted on its unhappy servant making a clean breast of the error to Mrs. Pink, his benefactress. He has now gone to discover America for a newspaper, and Mr. Rodwell is himself again.

But Edith will, as I have said, have none of that gentleman. Mr. Rodwell can take care of himself: he knows his way about and has never lacked a meal yet, or made a mistake out of Quixotry. I am heartily glad for Edith's sake that Albourne committed his folly and has disappeared; for I fancy that his fidelity to her, and the thought of his solitary life and sick body, were beginning to do their fell work. It would have been a misfortune had she married him.

At one time of her life almost every clean-minded girl seems to be a little fascinated by the idea of sacrificing herself for a dependent man. It is the first fumbling expression of the desire to mother. Men can have something of the same feeling too, selfish though they are. Many a young man quite genuinely believes that he would like his wife to be an invalid, so that he may nurse her and nurse her; but that kind of aspiration does not persist.

Pity is answerable for almost as many marriages as love; but the state cannot thrive on it. It is wrong. Once the glow of self-satisfaction has died out of the pityer, contempt has a way of coming in. I don't think Edith is like that; but for a healthy frank girl, as she is, with her quick sense of life, to marry an artificial weakling is against Nature, and I

have never known Nature forget an obligation. Of course in the unreal literary and artistic and argumentative circle in which Albourne lives, and of which Edith is getting so many glimpses, Nature is robbed of some of her vigour; but she sees her duty with clear vision even there, and does it.

Albourne is a good fellow and a very clever one, but Edith is worth a thousand of him. He is one of the men who want everything; she is steady and reasonable in her demands upon life. Women, as a whole, expect far less than men. You are something of an Albourne yourself, and want far too much, but you would be a fairer husband than he.

Yours
H. R.

EILEEN SOMERSCALES TO EDITH GRAHAM

13 The Crescent
Bath

Dear Edith,

I have just heard that Gwendolen Frome has been staying with you in London, and I am wondering if you intend to ask me. I had no idea that amanuenses were allowed to entertain, but of course your position is different from every one else's, and always will be. Gwendolen Frome is another of those lucky people who can do as they like, and

nothing is so true as the text about giving more riches to the rich and taking away from the poor that which they have. I am always trying to get Hercules to preach about this and tell the congregation a few home truths, but he does not see it at all and goes on with the kind texts. He says church is not the place for finding fault with strong wrong-doers, but for helping simple and sincere souls who want to do right; or at any rate, that he is not the one to criticise the others.

Of course, as you can see, a man who takes such a view of himself as this is always getting imposed upon, from the vicar downwards, and Hercules has to do far too many things and comes home tired out. His poor feet suffer most, for he doesn't care for cycling and walks everywhere, and he has very tender feet, and though I have found a hardening solution for him to use they do not seem to get better. I believe postmen and waiters have the same difficulty.

Hercules also has an idea that he can write, and he sits up late at night working at a history of St. Saviour's and its principal vicars. This seems to me very unnecessary because he will be sure to get a living somewhere else some day and he does not really belong here; but he says that clergymen ought to know all about their churches, and as the vicar is interested only in hunting and shooting Hercules must do it for him

I could have come to London for a week so easily

this month, because Mother had an old friend staying here, but it is now impossible, for we are alone together again and she is more dependent on me than ever. I have to read the *Morning Post* to her now every day, all through, because she thinks her eyes are going wrong, but that is all fancy. Hercules reads it sometimes, but he cannot be here always, though I know he would love to be.

Yours ever
EILEEN

GWENDOLEN FROME TO EDITH GRAHAM

THE RECTORY
WINFIELD

DEAR OLD EDITH,

What do you think? I have had a visit from ~~Algy~~ Mr. Damp. He suddenly appeared this afternoon in his car, having ridden all the way from London without stopping except to give his name and address to policemen. He started before it was light and was caught five times before he was here. And all because he loves me. Isn't that devotion? It is better than the good news from Aix to Ghent. He said that he couldn't rest until he had seen me and asked me if I would marry him. I didn't know what to say, because although I like him all right, it is so jolly sudden, and so jolly soon after what Jack told

me about Algy and you. I couldn't say that to Algy, of course, but I was thinking of it all the time.

He seems to have his surname most awfully on his mind, and it certainly is rather a rotten one. He said he wanted to change it, only there were so many others to choose from he couldn't make up his mind, and I rather jumped at that and said I would give him an answer if he would wait for two weeks and then come again with a new name.

After a long time of misery he agreed to this, but made me promise to help him to find a name. Do tell me of a good one, there's a darling Edith. I never could think of things like that; and I don't really think I ought to, because in a kind of way it makes me say yes all the time.

Your loving
GWEN

P.S. Just as I was sticking this up Father came in, and I asked him (without letting him know, of course, why I wanted to know) how people went to work to change their names—how they found new ones, I mean. He said that a very common way is to take one's mother's maiden name. I shall tell Algy this. I can't think why he never thought of it himself.

LAUGHTER IN COURT

FROM THE "BROADSHIRE WEEKLY POST"

Before the Tilton Bench, on Thursday, Algernon Damp, 14 Lancaster Gate, London, W., who did not appear, was charged with driving a motor car at the rate of thirty-one miles an hour over a measured distance of 440 yards. P.C. Ryley, who gave evidence as to speed, testified that when the defendant was acquainted with his offence he made use of an objectionable word. Pressed as to the nature of the word, witness said it was "Chestnuts"! The defendant had previously been stopped twice on the same day, and had already been fined at other courts. Mr. Beresford, who appeared for the defendant, said that his client pleaded guilty; he had no defence except that he was in a hurry. Speaking entirely on his own responsibility, Mr. Beresford added that perhaps it might weigh with the Bench if he explained that his client was hastening upon a very tender errand. They all knew what it was to be young and eager (Laughter). Having said that, he would leave the matter in their Worships' hands. £5 and costs.

GWENDOLEN FROME TO EDITH GRAHAM

THE RECTORY
WINFIELD

DEAR OLD EDITH,

I wrote to Algy about Father's idea, but he replied at once that it won't do at all, for some reason

or other which he doesn't give. Isn't it awful? I wish you would tell me which of the names in the list below you like best. I got them from an archery programme which I found.

Elton-Lee
Bampfield-Cogan
Nott-Bower
Brookes-King

(I rather fancy double names.) Or these :—

Berens
Naden
Legh
Gordon

(Father, who I asked about this, again without letting him know why, says that most people who change their names call themselves Gordon)

Glennie
Dodington
Prince
Hansard
Redmayne

Do you like any of these? They are all better than Mrs. Damp anyway.

Yours
GWEN

How about Alexander? Or Waller?

CHOOSING A NAME

GWENDOLEN FROME TO EDITH GRAHAM

THE RECTORY
WINFIELD

DEAR EDITH,

Algy has written to know what I think of Sandow as a name? Of course it is impossible, isn't it? I am at my wit's end. Do help me.

GWEN

EDITH GRAHAM TO GWENDOLEN FROME

17A KENSINGTON SQUARE W.

DEAR GWEN,

I think all your names are too elaborate. You want something very simple, I think. Why don't you choose one beginning with F and then you won't have to change your initial.

Yours
EDITH

CYNTHIA HYDE TO ANNIE HARBERTON

THE CORNER HOUSE
LEATHERHEAD

DEAR ANNIE,

If it is any one it is Sir Herbert Royce. There was a possibility once that it might be Mr

Albourne, a protégé of my aunt's, but that is all off now, even if it were ever on.

Really she is rather a minx. She fills me with admiration and despair. Admiration of her quiet self-sufficiency and composure, as she sits there, looking earnestly with her sympathetic brown eyes at whoever is talking, and thinking of Heaven knows what, and just by sheer attentive listening, or what they think is attentive listening, making dull men sensible, and sensible men eloquent. Always about themselves, of course. She makes me feel out of date, with my foolish obsolete tongue always wanting to say something itself and thus give myself away.

Your brother had better come home if he wants his ward. And I wish he would, because Sir Herbert, who used to be so interesting when he talked to me, now won't look at me any longer, although I try so hard to hold my tongue and listen and listen and listen!

Yours
CYNTHIA

GWENDOLEN FROME TO EDITH GRAHAM

THE RECTORY
WINFIELD

DEAR EDITH,

What a perfectly ripping idea about beginning with F, but I can't think of anything. I want to

tell Algy to try and think, but I can't without giving the show away, can I? He is to come again on Tuesday. I am going to try the Directory.

Yours
GWEN

SIR HERBERT ROYCE TO LYNN HARBERTON

MORTON'S HOTEL
JERMYN STREET

DEAR LYNN,

I think you ought to know as soon as any one that to-day I asked your ward to be my wife, and she consented. I never thought to marry again, but she is so much superior in sense and charm to all women I have lately met that I decline to admit any inconsistency. It simply means that for a long time I have known only the shadows of women. Whether or not I have carried by assault a garrison which you were proposing to starve out, I do not know; but if I have, you must not complain, for all is fair in love and war, and no one has had such opportunities as yourself. I will not say any more as you will be certainly hearing from Edith.

Yours
H. R.

EDITH GRAHAM TO LYNN HARBERTON

(This letter was never posted)

MY DEAR DEAR GUARDIAN,

I have done a very decisive thing : I have told Sir Herbert I will marry him. Perhaps I ought first to have asked you if I might, but there was not time. He put the question in a rush and I answered it in a rush ; and we shall be very happy. I have made Herbert promise that when he settles down it shall be in a house near Winfield, so that we shall all see each other very often. Do send me a word saying that you are glad about this.

Your devoted

EDITH

LYNN HARBERTON TO EDITH GRAHAM

(This letter was never posted)

MY DEAR CHILD,

I have just had a letter from Herbert which has made me very unhappy. I know him so much better than you, and cannot therefore avoid misgivings as to the future. I know how direct and forcible he is, and how devoted he is to the fact, but he is impulsive and masterful, and he will want you to be just clay in his hands after the first intoxication

of passion is past. You are not the woman to love so blindly and meekly as to like that. Some women might, undoubtedly; but not you. I don't want to make you unhappy: all I want in the world is your happiness; but I cannot help telling you how I, who know you both so well, feel about this engagement, and asking you both to wait a little longer before you make your compact irrevocable. It is not much to ask: if you are sure you are right, it is no hardship at all; if you are in any doubt, you will thank me. I cannot write more as I am not well to-day. A little fever, I think. Good-night, my dear child.

Yours always

L. H.

(A few days elapse)

EDITH GRAHAM TO SIR HERBERT ROYCE

MORTON'S HOTEL
JERMYN STREET

I am so very unhappy that I could not wait to see you at home but had to come here. And now you are out. I have to say a very hard thing, and that is that I have discovered I do not love you. I admire you, I respect you, I like to listen to you and be with you and see through your eyes, but I do not love you, and I have just learned that I never can love you because I love some one else. You will

think I should have told you this last week; but I could not because I did not know it then. I had never really thought about it until you asked me to marry you, and it is in my distress since over my answer to that question and fear of the future that the knowledge has come to me. I do not know whether he loves me or not, but I know that I love him. My dear dear friend, will you forgive me. I am so grieved and so ashamed to have misled you like this, and you have been so good and so kind.

E. G.

EDITH GRAHAM TO CYNTHIA HYDE

17A KENSINGTON SQUARE W.

MY VERY DEAR CYNTHIA,

Why, O why, did you choose this week of all weeks in which to go away—for I need you so seriously? I have never wanted a confidante before, but now I want one terribly—so long as it is you. I am utterly perplexed and wretched. Sir Herbert asked me last week to be his wife, and I said yes, but now I know it is all wrong and impossible. I have hardly slept for three nights, thinking of it and seeing the mistake so clearly.

The fact is, as I know now, I do not love him. For a little while he carried me off my feet with his rush of new ideas, and strong ways, and under-

standing ways, and I grew to admire him immensely and find him the best company. And at last I thought it was love. But it was never love quite: it was excitement, a kind of fascination (and even resentment), dependence, all kinds of things; but it wasn't love. I can see that now. I can see also that the type of man I should love is very different, quite as much, if not more, in need of me than I of him: with a quieter, more intricate mind.

Of course I ought to have told him at once, but for one thing he had to go away to Scotland, and for another I wanted to be sure. It might have just been a passing mood. So I went on hoping and hoping all might come right, but knowing in my heart that I had make a mistake and it must be cleared up directly.

I wrote to Mr. Harberton at once, but I could not send the letter. It seemed so terribly cruel somehow to tell him who was so far away and so lonely of my happiness and plans for a future in which he and his work, that I have always helped in and believed in, would have no place. He has not written to me, although I know that Sir Herbert told him the news.

Just now I am troubled day and night by this thought about selfishness. All our individual happiness looks like selfishness. Sir Herbert says that it is all right that we should be selfish. He says that it is only selfishness which sends the world round at all: that it is Nature's motive power, and that

human beings are incapable of unselfishness; and when I point to examples of unselfishness he proves at once that they are really nothing but self-indulgence in virtue or asceticism instead of what we call excess and pleasure. Did it ever seem to you that people can be self-indulgent in self-denial? It is a horribly confusing thought, if one has been brought up as I was. I suppose future generations will be able to accept it naturally enough.

I am writing this to you because it is a relief to me to express myself and make my position clear to myself (words seem to bring assurance), rather than because I want advice, even if you could answer this quickly, which you cannot. I don't much believe in women asking advice. Men seem to do so with success, but I never heard of a woman taking any advice but her own. Yet I do believe in telling one's difficulties. But, O Cynthia, I wish you were at home so that I could come to you.

I got through the week somehow till three o'clock to-day and then I could not stand it any longer. Sir Herbert was coming to-morrow, he had told me, but I could not wait. I started off to his hotel as fast as a hansom would take me, and then stopped it and walked, feeling absolutely sure I could walk faster. He had not come back yet, but his man let me go into his sitting room to write a letter, and I just told him as kindly and quickly as I could that I took back my answer of the week before. But, O Cynthia, I had to do a dreadful thing. I had to tell

him that I loved some one else. I had not absolutely known it till last night—not really known it, but the certainty came upon me like a flash and just settled everything; because whether that other loves me or not, I love him and I cannot marry any one else. When I called it a dreadful thing to tell Sir Herbert that, I don't mean an unwomanly thing, but such a cruel thing to have to say, after his kindness, and doubly cruel because by just saying it I instantly got back so much peace of mind. It is terrible at what cost to others a great part of our happiness, or at least self-satisfaction, is purchased.

Do come to town directly you return.

Yours

E. G.

SIR HERBERT ROYCE TO EDITH GRAHAM

MORTON'S HOTEL
JERMYN STREET

Edith, my dear Edith, it must be as you say. If you had said only that you did not love me I would have made you love me; but when you say you love some one else there is nothing for me to do except to make everything as easy for you as I can, and that I will do. Never again say you are ashamed: it was not your doing. We cannot help these things. God send that every one might find out their mistake as quickly as you have done!

H. R.

ANNIE HARBERTON TO CYNTHIA HYDE

VILLA DELACROIX
ALGIERS

MY DEAR CYNTHIA,

We are in great distress about my brother Lynn. He received a letter two days ago from Sir Herbert Royce saying that he was engaged to Edith, and Lynn, who was at first quite dazed, is now seriously ill and at times delirious. He cannot sleep at all but talks incessantly of Edith in such a way as to leave no doubt of what his feelings are and why he is ill. Can nothing be done?

It would be the most unhappy marriage. Herbert is a fine character but very overbearing and exacting. He wants all coats to be cut to his measure, and his restlessness would kill any ordinary wife in a year. Edith may be under his glamour now, but that will soon go and she will find herself in chains. But won't you see her and try and find out something? She may so easily have been impulsive and already be repenting it. It is a little significant, my brother thinks, that she has not written to Lynn: he seems to see some hope there. The doctor says that if Lynn gets worse, Edith ought to come out.

Yours in great anxiety

ANNIE HARBERTON

CYNTHIA HYDE TO ANNIE HARBERTON

(Telegram)

Broken off. Send your brother home.

CYNTHIA

CYNTHIA HYDE TO ANNIE HARBERTON

THE CORNER HOUSE
LEATHERHEAD

MY DEAR ANNIE,

Your letter followed me about for a day or so, or I should perhaps have been able to telegraph the good news sooner; but I don't know that for certain. I had a letter from Edith which decided me to run up to town at once, and it was after that that I was able to telegraph, or rather during our talk—for I said "Excuse me a moment, I have forgotten to telephone to Herbert" (my Herbert I mean), which was a fib, and I rushed out to the post office in Young Street and telegraphed to you, and then went back to hear the rest.

The dear thing was frightfully unhappy, but I think she deserved it a little. One must not be so nice to every one, you know. It doesn't do. Either it means that you don't marry at all, or you find yourself in the hands of a strong masterful man

like Sir Herbert, whom I love all the same, although his stories of big game shooting have an awful effect on our household, and poor Herbert's (I mean my Herbert again: there ought to be a law against men having the same name) fur coat. I caught Dermot in it the other day, of course wrong side out, being struck by Jack with an assegai. He was pig-sticking, he said; and then there was an awful smell of burning and I found them barbecuing it. Herbert doesn't know yet.

Now that she is calm again, Edith knows—as she always did know, underneath—that she loves your brother Lynn, and has never loved any one else. Why he sent her to London instead of marrying her, *I* shall never understand. I cannot think what men are made of. They have now simply lost six months of this miserably short life—and all because he had not a little more of Sir Herbert's courage or impatience. I hope he is on his way here now. He cannot come too soon if my poor aunt is to get any more work out of her secretary, who is putting the wrong letters into the wrong envelopes from morning till night.

It all makes me very happy to think that I have been married so long, and have five boys and a husband to think for, instead of having to think about my own affairs. That is the secret.

Yours affectionately

CYNTHIA

THE DIPLOMATIST AT DRAUGHTS

GWENDOLEN FROME TO EDITH GRAHAM

THE RECTORY
WINFIELD

DEAR EDITH,

Algy came yesterday afternoon covered with mud. He had a list of six names which he fancies, and one of them luckily begins with F and is not bad—Farrar. Algy was so very much in love after all this long and harassing time that I couldn't say anything but yes. But when he went to see Father and Mother about it, they insisted on our not really being engaged for a year, which is a pretty rotten long time.

Algy stayed the night and played draughts with Mother, and was beaten every time, and she likes him; so that is so much to the good. Every now and then we heard screams of laughter coming from the kitchen, where the chauffeur was having his supper, and quite early this morning I heard what I thought was the car and jumped out of bed and ran to the window, and there were Ellen and Fanny going for a ride. It might so easily have been me if Father was not so old fashioned and cautious. I'm sure that Algy really loves me, and if he does there's a whole year of our life wasted.

Yours
GWEN

P.S. Algernon's single doubt is his mother, whose only son he is and who cannot bear to lose him. When I told Father this he said he doubted if it was a real trouble. "A mother," he said, "who would die with the least possible concern to her son would choose the moment when he became engaged."

ANNIE HARBERTON TO CYNTHIA HYDE

VILLA DELACROIX
ALGIERS

DEAR CYNTHIA,

Your telegram made me so happy. Lynn had already begun to mend before it came, one to the same effect from Herbert having preceded it. He is getting strong very rapidly, although he still cannot sleep, and he will sail by the first steamer. I am all impatience for your letter.

Yours affectionately and very gratefully
ANNIE HARBERTON

(A few days elapse)

A DISSUASIVE PROPOSAL

LYNN HARBERTON TO EDITH GRAHAM

(By hand)

GRAND HOTEL
CHARING CROSS

DEAR CHILD,

I came back this morning and am at the Grand Hotel in Trafalgar Square. I could not stay away any longer, hearing nothing of you direct and so much from others. I wrote you a letter after Herbert told me about it, but I could not send it, and now that I have heard from Herbert once more I have come myself instead of writing again.

I want to warn you, dear Child, dear Edith, that this is quite a different kind of letter from any that I have written you before, and that very likely you will be much happier if you don't read any farther; but I had to write it: the need has been growing stronger every day until I can put it off no longer.

What I want to say is: Do you care enough for me for us to marry and go through this queer world together? I used to think that I should never put this question to any woman, having no need of any that I met, and indeed shrinking from imposing upon any fellow creature so unsatisfactory a mass of whims and tangents and self-mistrust as I am. And then I

began to want you, Edith. It was largely why I went away and sent you to London: that I wished to examine myself narrowly and see what I really desired and how much independence I really possessed, and also to give you a chance of thinking of me at a distance. Absence makes the sight grow clearer.

How you are thinking of me I do not know; but these months have taught me, Edith, that I love you, worship you, and have no useful life but with you. There is nothing I would not do to make you happy if you would come to me, and I know that you would by your nearness make me stronger. And yet if you take my advice you will say no, because I am not really fit for you; there must be other men who could make you happier and give you more of what you ought to have. You see what I am like. I offer myself with one hand and pull myself back with the other; and that is my way in most things. And yet I love you continually, and want nothing but you in this world—your heart and your mind and your eyes.

The terrible thing, Edith, is that if you say no—and how can you say anything else?—I have lost you completely. Because we could not go on as we were of old, so happily, over the Doctor, in my study at Winfield. It is this thought that turns my blood cold and stops my heart suddenly at all kinds of odd places, and always in the small hours.

The boy is waiting for an answer, but you may be out. If you are, will you telegraph directly you come

in? Whatever you say, I shall just look in on you for a minute this afternoon.

Edith dear, I am your loving lover whatever happens.

L.

EDITH GRAHAM TO LYNN HARBERTON

(By hand)

To think that you are here, and why! It makes me so ashamed, so happy. You ought to be cross with me for being so fickle, and instead you come rushing back to say you love me. How can I say I love you, and how could you believe it if I did? O, I am so humiliated to have misread my feelings as I did; it seems to me so little, so petty. I have always so admired constancy, so desired to make up my own mind and not change it, and here I am all fickleness at the first opportunity! I daren't meet my own face in the glass.

But I do love you and I do know that I love you and shall always love you. But perhaps I am not the woman you are thinking: I am so much older now: I have lived years in the past two weeks. Do come quickly and see.

EDITH

LYNN HARBERTON TO EDITH GRAHAM

(By hand)

GRAND HOTEL
CHARING CROSS

My precious Child, I must just send you this line. O how foolish I have been. And yet have I? Isn't it better to believe that a thing happens only when it must, and that if we had anticipated this joy we might not have been ready for it? Edith, my darling, my sweet sweet woman, I will reach your house at half past three if I can live so long. Don't say things like those about yourself: don't think them. It so often happens that we have to be mistaken before we can be right.

L.

LYNN HARBERTON TO ANNIE HARBERTON

GRAND HOTEL
CHARING CROSS

MY DEAR ANNIE,

You may possibly have guessed the cause of my restlessness during the past few weeks I was with you. I can now complete the story by saying that to-day I asked Edith to marry me and she said

yes. She is possibly making the mistake of her life, but she refuses to think so. I shall stay here for a few days and then go to Winfield and begin to prepare the Manor House for its mistress, because we both feel that knowing each other so well it would be absurd to be engaged for a minute longer than is necessary. The wedding cannot be before June, because Edith refuses to leave Mrs. Pink until then, the old lady being not at all well and requiring help in some elaborate scheme that cannot be completed quickly; and though I should like her to come at once, her decision to stay on is just one of the things that I most admire in her.

As for the wedding itself, it will be the simplest thing possible. For my own part I should prefer jumping over a stick, or some such rite, but I suppose Frome must have his couple of guineas and the villagers their rice. All life is compromise.

You and Wordsworth have been very good and patient with me, and I feel a beast to have imposed so much moodiness and jumpiness on you for so long. But that is over now. Henceforth I am all quietude, and steady as the polar star.

Your loving brother

LYNN

LYNN HARBERTON TO JOAN ARUNDEL

GRAND HOTEL
CHARING CROSS

MY DEAR JOAN,

What do you think I am going to do? You see from the postmark and the very uninteresting stamp (for which poor Cyril won't give a thank you, I know, and how he'll curl his proud pirate-captain's lip!) that I have come back to London. And why do you think I have come back? Because you told me to.

Here beginneth Dramatic Dialogue

Joan. "O Mother, just listen, Uncle Lynn says I told him to come back. I didn't, did I?"

Mother. "I don't remember, dear. Did you? What did you say in your letter to him?"

Joan. "I forget. O no, I just said that Phyllis and me wished he would marry Edith."

Mother. "Did you say that, darling? . . . Did you . . .? But you shouldn't. . . . How very interesting. . . . Gurney! Gurney!"

Squire (very cross, from behind *The Times*). "Well, what is it?"

Mother. "What do you think? Lynn Harberton is going to marry Edith Graham."

Squire. "Nonsense!"

Mother. "Yes, he is."

Squire. "How do you know?"

Mother. "I do know. He has told Joan."

Joan. "O Mother, how can you say so?—he hasn't."

Squire. "Well, all I can say is she's a silly girl throwing herself away on that——"

Mother and Joan (together, very angry and loyal). "Shhhhhh!"

Here endeth Dramatic Dialogue

There, that tells not only my story but your story. I am coming back directly, partly to get ready the house for your aunt (she will be your aunt now), but chiefly because my boxes are full of queer things from Algiers for all of you, including something for your bad-tempered father.

Your devoted oncle

LEAN ARBERTONG

SIR HERBERT ROYCE TO LYNN HARBERTON

HOTEL LIVERPOOL
RUE CASTIGLIONE
PARIS

DEAR LYNN,

She is yours, was yours all the time. Love her well—she is worth it; and love is the best. Love her well, love her unceasingly, forget yourself and spoil her. No good woman was ever the worse for being spoilt. As for me, I am off to the Zambesi again.

H. R.

MISS FIELDING TO LYNN HARBERTON

17 VICARAGE GATE
KENSINGTON

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I am very glad to hear the news. Being an old maid full of curiosity (I think, by the way, you ought to have more: it is the best antiseptic) I have naturally seen a great deal of marriage; and I don't think yours will be a failure. The success of marriage, I have noticed, depends to a great extent on the rapidity with which one learns whether one is to spoil or to be spoiled, and one's acceptance of the situation. Women of course do not want spoiling as much as men, and they are better spoilers; but many a girl who began her courtship with what seemed to be justifiable visions of tireless loving hands and eyes by her sofa, has had to supply those comforts herself to her husband, by his.

Another frequent cause of unhappiness between husband and wife is a change in the husband's circumstances. A man who marries in obscurity and then becomes rich or famous or emerges into some kind of prominence very often finds that his wife cannot go with him. They married on terms that have not been carried out. But you are old enough to have thought about things long enough to know how you are likely to develop. You are indeed, I think, more fixed than most persons; and of Edith

I have no fears, unless you encourage your introspective habits and leave her out in the cold. That is the danger you have to guard against.

If you ever have any children I implore you to bring them up to expect misery. Half the trouble in the world comes from the idea that we are intended to be happy. If I had children I should drive the opposite notion into them, and then every happy moment that came to them would be pure joy instead of a source of uneasiness as it now is.

Your friend

ADELAIDE FIELDING

P.S. In the summer, if you will ask me, I should like to come to Winfield for a few days and sit in your garden before all the flowers give way to shrubbery.

MISS FASE TO EDITH GRAHAM

THE LAURELS
GRANGE-OVER-SANDS

MY DEAR EDITH,

I am so glad to hear of your engagement. Of course it would have been very nice if it had been Sir Herbert Royce instead of Mr. Harberton, because then you would have been Lady Royce, and a title always seems to me a distinguished thing even in

these times when so many are given to quite vulgar people. There is a knight who takes a house here every summer, and I can assure you that the friends who come to see him for week ends are most odious, and the livery his groom wears is not nearly so neat as our doctor's. He was I believe a mayor, or a brewer, or perhaps both, and once as he drove past this house he threw his cigar end at Griselda. But I am very glad about your marriage, because although doubtless there must always be single women in England, with the number of women so much in advance of men, yet I have always prayed that you would not be one of them, because I know how good and happy a wife you will be.

I am sure Mr. Harberton is a very fortunate man, much more fortunate than he deserves, I think, considering how long he has known you and how he might have asked you any time these past five years and you not too young even then. But, as Mr. Willocks, the churchwarden, who is a very wise and often witty man, says, we have to wait the Almighty's appointed hour and not until His clock strikes can we do anything, and so I suppose it is all right. All the same I blame Mr. Harberton for shilly-shallying and not knowing his mind, with all your happiness at stake.

Poor Mr. Willocks, he has had much trouble lately, his only son having been injured severely at a football match at school. I can't think how they can allow football to be played. Cricket I can under-

stand, although I read in a paper the other day that a butcher in Australia—or was it New Zealand?—had been so severely stunned by a cricket ball hitting him on the temple that he had lost his memory and had no recollection whatever of who or what he was. Arthur Willocks was not so badly hurt as that, but he is likely to be in bed for at least two weeks, and as Mrs. Willocks has been a sufferer from insomnia for years it is very sad. She has tried everything without success, but a gentleman who lectured here last week on Hygiene for the Home, a most interesting lecture, and who stayed at the Willocks', recommended her to try a hammock instead of a bed, and they are having one put up now, and that may work wonders. I am sure I hope it will, if only for poor Mr. Willocks' sake.

Now that it is all settled I can tell you, dear, a secret. You may have wondered why I have never asked you to stay with me. It was not I can assure you because I did not want you, for I have wanted to see you exceedingly, as how could I help wanting to see my own dear sister's only daughter, but because of young Bernard Falkiner, the vicar's son, who will not do any work, but leads an idle life here and is a hopeless ne'er-do-well, I fear, and such a grief to his poor parents. I could not bring myself to ask you here while he was about, for he is so very handsome and charming, with all his wild and dreadful ways, that I had a premonition you would be attracted by him, and that would be so disastrous. That

was the only reason, my dear. Now that you are an engaged woman I do so hope you will come soon. There is not much excitement to offer you, but the air is very good, and the view of the Bay is very pretty from my sitting-room, and I have such a number of flowers in the garden, sharing a gardener as I do with Miss Passmore and Miss Cole, two days a week each and quite cheap. I get books regularly from the railway library, so that you would have plenty to read, and there is often an interesting lecture at the Hall, and some very nice people live here, among them Mr. Greatorex, who having been to Italy knows all about pictures and has a most interesting collection of photographs of foreign places which he is always so pleased and ready to show. Poor man, we have all seen them so often that when a stranger comes his happiness knows no bounds. So do come, dear, as soon as you can manage it, for just as long as you like, only you must let me have good notice.

I want to give you a very nice present. We have such an excellent shop here, kept by a most enterprising and worthy man, a Mr. Mister. It is a very awkward name, isn't it? It always seems so absurd to say "Mr." twice. I have told him about your engagement and he is most interested and is going to get a selection of anything you like for me to choose from. So will you please say which of the following articles you most fancy?—

Butter dish.

Egg stand.

Cruet.
Salt cellars and knife and fork rests.
Salad bowl with fork and spoon.
Biscuit box.

I should like to give you something you were constantly using, although I hope you won't call it by my name, as some young people here do with their wedding presents. It is very disconcerting to be asked to pass Aunt Emily instead of the mustard, or to be offered Uncle James and finds it holds biscuits. Mr. Mister very strongly recommends a new kind of coal-scuttle, which he calls a perdoneum, but I am sure Mr. Harberton has coal-scuttles enough. It is one of the drawbacks of marrying a man firmly established in his own house that people have such difficulty in choosing presents.

I must stop now or I shall miss the post.

Your affectionate

AUNT CHARLOTTE

P.S. I have just remembered that the butcher who lost his memory was living in Tasmania. I hope he has got it back now, poor man; although if I were a butcher I am sure I should like to forget it. Of course I don't say for certain you would have liked Bernard Falkiner, but I had the most serious presentiment and it is a dark fascinating kind of handsomeness.

LYNN HARBERTON TO ADELAIDE FIELDING

THE MANOR HOUSE
WINFIELD

DEAR FRIEND,

Your letter was so full of good sense that I wonder there was nothing extra to pay on it. I feel that I must make haste to answer it, our wedding day being so near at hand, or it will not be answered at all. Because, as of course you know, it is only the unmarried who write letters. At any rate, good letters. Notes of course are within the compass even of a Henry VIII : but letters, long letters with stuff to them,—for these you must go to the unattached. All the best letter-writers have been bachelors. At any rate Cowper, Walpole, Lamb, Gray, and Keats were bachelors, and it would be hard to find their superiors in the art ; while Byron might almost come under the same heading so far as the restriction of the marriage tie was concerned, and he wrote good letters too. Better still there is Edward FitzGerald, who I think may be included among the bachelors in spite of Bernard Barton's daughter bearing his name.

Looking at this little group again I notice that not only were they bachelors but also to a considerable extent recluses. Cowper, Gray, and FitzGerald were thorough recluses, Lamb was very nearly one, Keats dwelt much apart, and Walpole, for all his

frivolities and flirtations with society, was a lonely man. Byron too. So that we find that the best letter-writers not only were bachelors but recluses or semi-recluses also. This, when one comes to think of it, is natural enough. The man much in affairs, beset by friends and acquaintances, has little time to think of anything to say in letters, and no time to write them; moreover it is not until one is withdrawn to some little distance from one's correspondent that the need or impulse to write is likely to come. We do not write letters to the easily accessible; notes merely, if at all.

It is also reasonable enough that a bachelor, whether or not a recluse, should write a good letter, for so many of the hindrances that come between a man who has a wife and other responsibilities are not his. He can sit at his desk as long as he likes; he can be late for meals. So, it is true, can a husband, but not a good husband; which leads to the reflection that only bad husbands write good letters. Being a good husband is occupation enough. Where the bachelor is writing letters, the good husband, I suppose, is writing cheques.

And there are other reasons for the pre-eminence of the unattached in this art. The mind of the bachelor is more elastic, has longer hours of liberty. He also has time for flirtations and sympathetic interests and friends. Flirtations and friends are needful for good letters: husbands have few friends and of course no flirtations.

So you will expect no more letters from me. Such expressions of good will as I have a mind to send you will drop naturally into Edith's postscripts, or be forgotten. "Lynn sends his love"—that will be the epitaph of our dead correspondence.

It is rather interesting to find this additional count in the indictment of marriage—that it kills letter-writing. I have not examined the correspondence of any married letter-writer to see to what extent his matter and manner deteriorated after he took a wife: but no doubt, unless he was a bad husband, the search would reveal lamentable differences. With exceptions, of course: the principal being perhaps Stevenson; who was, however, exceptional throughout. When I use the phrase, "the best letter-writers," I mean, of course, the best literary letter-writers. Of the really best letter-writers we know nothing; they have always been obscure, non-literary, and therefore are not published. After all letters ought not to be published. It is quite on the cards that the more publishable a letter is, the less a letter it is; which disqualifies Lamb and Cowper, Gray and Keats, Walpole and FitzGerald instantly. These, it might be held, wrote little epistolary essays, self-consciously, and should stand in a class apart.

The question is, are the best letters, as distinct from the best literary letters, also written by bachelors? I fancy that they are, only with a change of sex. I fancy that when it comes to the real letters, full of news and gossip, the best are

written by spinsters. (You see I am now getting personal.) I would not say that married women cannot write good letters, but for the most part they wait until they are free—like Madame de Sévigné, who was a widow at twenty-five, if I remember rightly, and who wrote letters divinely for half a century after.

And now I have to talk with an architect about a new window opening into the garden from Edith's own room; and after he has gone, I am going to drive to Witford to see about some Chippendale furniture for the same elegant apartment.

So I must stop.

You observe why I stop? Because I am recalled to the duties of one not actually married but about to marry. Here is proof enough.

Yours (for the last time)

L. H.

MISS FIELDING TO LYNN HARBERTON

17 VICARAGE GATE
KENSINGTON

DEAR LYNN,

Since bachelors possess the earth and enjoy its fulness, it is only right that they should make some return. Let them go on writing the best

letters. All the same, I don't despair of getting many another good letter from you—and you a good husband too!

Yours affectionately
ADELAIDE FIELDING

P.S. A little ivory tea-caddy, which might easily have held the leaves from which your thirsty Doctor's seventeen cups were occasionally brewed, should reach you in a day or two, and with it my love and all good wishes for your and Edith's happiness.

EILEEN SOMERSCALES TO EDITH GRAHAM

13 THE CRESCENT
BATH

DEAR EDITH,

And so it has come at last! I have never heard the postman's knock for weeks without saying to myself "There is Edith's announcement of her engagement to a millionaire," for there was never any doubt in my mind as to your happy fate. Mr. Harberton is not exactly a millionaire, perhaps, but he has a large income and a beautiful house and you can be married just as soon as you like. Mother declines to be left till next Lady Day at the earliest, and Hercules having very foolishly lent his brother

some money is now poorer than ever. He has also sprained his ankle playing football with his boys' Club. But I hope you will be very happy, dear.

Yours ever

EILEEN

(Three weeks elapse)

EDITH GRAHAM TO LYNN HARBERTON

17A KENSINGTON SQUARE W.

DEAREST,

I have very sad news for you. Mrs. Pink is dead. She was taken ill at four yesterday afternoon and at five she died. This is how she would have wished, having always hoped for the sudden death that we are brought up to pray against. She was conscious all the time, although in acute pain about the heart, and she faced the end very bravely and gave me a hundred little commissions between her seizure and the arrival of the doctor who put an end to all talking. All that she said was about benefactions to all kinds of people. Even when fighting for breath and strength to speak, her mind was set entirely on three or four schemes which have been occupying her lately. There can never have been such a determined altruist. There ought

to be a dispensation of immortality for the sweet natures.

This means I suppose that I shall come back to Winfield pretty soon. I shall stay here to help with the dismantling of the house, which Mr. Hyde, who is here now and is the executor, says has to be begun directly after the funeral, and to be of any use or comfort that I can to Miss Fielding; and then I shall come back.

Poor little Mr. Conran is inconsolable. I want to take his head in my arms and wipe his poor little red eyes, but I shan't. The strangest odd people have been calling all day with flowers and little messages of grief—pensioners of Mrs. Pink, of some of whom she never told me anything.

Mr. Hyde and Cynthia are staying here till after the funeral, so I shall be less depressed than I might be.

Dear Heart, don't think you ought to come. There is no need whatever, although I should love it if you did. But I know how wretched a funeral makes you, and Mrs. Pink would have hated your wretchedness. One of the things she made me promise at her bedside was not to wear any black for her.

Good-night

Your

EDITH

THE REV. WILBERFORCE PINK TO EDITH GRAHAM

HOTEL RITZ
HOMBURG

DEAR MISS GRAHAM,

Your very sad letter has utterly prostrated me. It found me on the point of starting for the new mud baths at Teufels-bad where I had engaged rooms for a month; but I need hardly say that I at once cancelled the arrangements and returned the ticket. In my present condition of physical and mental collapse I shall not venture to travel; but at the beginning of next week I shall hasten home with all speed to do what is in my power in this period of grief. The suddenness of my poor dear wife's end moves me to tears whenever I think of it, depriving her as it did of all opportunity of propitiating Heaven by a humble recantation of much error. Not that I greatly admire repentance at such a season, savouring as it must of self-protection, which is perhaps the least lovely of poor human nature's besetting faults. I am writing to my dear wife's solicitors informing them of my present address, and doubtless they will communicate with me. It was however clearly understood between us some years ago that I should be spared the vexatious exactions of the duty of an executor.

I am

Yours faithfully

WILBERFORCE PINK

MRS. PINK'S WILL, DATED FEBRUARY 16, 1906

(Extracts)

This is the last will and testament of me Victoria Pink of 17a Kensington Square, London, W. I hereby revoke all other wills that I may have previously made.

I appoint as executor my nephew Herbert Chisholm Hyde and ask him to accept £500 for his trouble.

I bequeath all the copies of the Bible that may be found in the house at the time of my death to my husband Wilberforce Pink, feeling confident from the dogged precariousness of his health that he will long survive me.

To my only sister Adelaide Fielding I bequeath my library of Rationalistic literature, not with any idea that she wants it, but in the hope that she may from time to time open a volume at random and chance upon an enlightening passage. I leave also to my sister Adelaide Fielding my cat Prynka.

To my nephew Herbert Chisholm Hyde I leave five thousand pounds free of duty, the interest to be employed by him as he thinks fit until his boys reach the age of twenty-one. Each one as he comes of age is to receive a fifth of the principal. Supposing one or more not to survive, the sum is to be divided equally among the remainder.

I leave to my niece Cynthia Hyde £2000 free of duty and whatever furniture, linen and household

effects she may like. The rest, after all legacies have been subtracted, is to be sold; but before this is done I wish my sister Adelaide Fielding, my niece Cynthia Hyde and my friend Edith Graham to distribute pictures and books or any other articles that they think suitable as souvenirs to all my friends who express a wish to possess something of the kind.

I leave to my nephew Thomas Orme Rodwell any two pictures he may choose, and two thousand pounds free of duty on the condition that he gives his solemn promise never to start a newspaper that has not the approval of my sister Adelaide Fielding and my friend Sir Herbert Royce.

I leave to my friend Dennis Albourne the sum of five thousand pounds free of duty which, although I make no conditions, I should prefer him to leave invested as it now is, touching only the interest; and I should like him, in so far as his impulsive and humane nature will permit, to apply the interest to his own maintenance and comforts, any payments that he may care to make to others coming from his own earnings. No literary man of character, I am convinced ever did worse work for having a sure £200 a year.

To my friend and helper Charles Conran I leave five hundred pounds free of duty and any hundred books he may choose from my shelves after my sister Adelaide Fielding has made her choice.

To each of my servants in my employ at the time of my death I leave one hundred pounds free of duty,

and to each some personal article of my own as a little souvenir of friendship.

To every waitress in the A.B.C. shop at Charing Cross, where I often had lunch, I leave £20 free of duty.

I also leave to my friend Edith Graham for her own use the furniture of my little study and a sum of £1000 free of duty.

I leave to my friend Edith Graham a sum of three thousand pounds free of duty to be spent by her in building and furnishing Almshouses at Winfield for ten old persons of that parish, to be called the Graham Trust; and furthermore I leave a sum of ten thousands pounds free of duty which may either remain invested as it now is, or be reinvested in some safe stock, to the said Edith Graham, the interest to be employed by her in weekly doles to the occupants of the Winfield almshouses and in the maintenance of the buildings.

MISS MITI TO EDITH GRAHAM

c/o Mrs. Cunningham
Bellevue
Bedford

Dear Miss Graham,

It was so very sweet of you to tell me about your engagement. It is the one thing I have wished

for you,—indeed I have done more than that, for I have prayed for it for you too, and the two children here, who know all about you, have prayed also, not exactly that you might be married but that you might be happy, which is going to be the same thing. It would be so terrible if a beautiful woman like you were not married, and I think the gentleman whom you love is the most fortunate of men. I expect you will be so much occupied in your new home and new life that you will not have any time to write letters to any one as unimportant as I am, but, dear Miss Graham, I am sure your kind heart will never let you quite forget the little friend you have been so kind to, who will never forget you.

Yours very truly
LYDIA MITT

EDITH GRAHAM TO MISS FIELDING

CHURCH COTTAGE
WINFIELD

MY DEAR MISS FIELDING,

I am sending you a letter from little Miss Mitt which has made me cry. It seems so wrong that I should be all tinglingly happy with love and she should go on bravely slaving for that horrid woman at Bedford. Don't you think we might give her two little rooms by the gateway of the almshouse

and make her the Lady Governor? I am so sure that dear Mrs. Pink would have said yes, and I will so gladly pay her salary out of my own money (for I am now rich !). If you say you see no objection I will arrange it all directly and get her here to help us make our plans.

Yours always
EDITH

P.S. Lynn sends his love.

MISS FIELDING TO EDITH GRAHAM

17 VICARAGE GATE
KENSINGTON

MY DEAR CHILD,

Of course. She will be the best little Lady Governor in England, and you will be able to go with your husband all over the earth as often as you like, leaving everything in her hands quite comfortably. Meanwhile, having had some luck with an investment, I have sent her a little anonymous present, just for fun, with every circumstance of secrecy so that she will never never know where it comes from. I had better have kept it, for she will probably spend it all on her employer.

Yours most lovingly
ADELAIDE FIELDING

THE REV. WILBERFORCE PINK TO EDITH GRAHAM

GRAND HOTEL
MATLOCK

After mature reflection, not unassisted by prayer, Mr. Wilberforce Pink has decided that the better part is mercy. He will therefore not institute proceedings for the annulment of his poor deluded wife's will, although that it was made so largely in favour of Miss Graham, a comparative stranger, *under unfortunate influence*, is only too obvious to one who, like Mr. Wilberforce Pink, had many and intimate opportunities of learning Mrs. Pink's character.

Although, however, Mr. Wilberforce Pink, partly on account of the many infirmities which Heaven with perplexing impartiality has thought fit to inflict upon him, and partly from innate aversion from causing pain, has decided not to put the law in motion to protect his rights, he makes yet one more appeal to Miss Graham to forgo voluntarily some at least of the considerable benefits which her close association with the late Mrs. Pink, when that lady's intellect *was below its average vigour*, has diverted into her possession.

Incidentally Mr. Wilberforce Pink would remark that much personal experience in the old happy days when he was an active clergyman, and many years of careful sociological reading since, have convinced him that the almshouse is one of the greatest mis-

takes in public charity. It merely helps to impede or undo the functions of the workhouse.

Mr. Wilberforce Pink will be at Matlock until the 27th, after which his address will be Salzo Maggiore, where he hopes to derive as much benefit from the baths as is possible to an invalid whose mind is harassed by inconsiderate persons.

MISS MITT TO EDITH GRAHAM

c/o Mrs. Cunningham
Bellevue
Bedford

Dear Miss Graham,

Your letter has made me so happy I don't know what to do. If there is one thing that I should love more than any other it is to look after poor old people. I don't think I ever told you that I have quite a little knowledge of medicine, for my father was a doctor, you know, and I used to help him in his dispensary. This ought to be very useful in sudden cases, oughtn't it?

The only thing that bothers me is leaving Mrs. Cunningham, who has been so very kind to me and has put me in the way of learning so much not only about the care of children, but cooking too, and many household matters. I was the most ignorant creature when I came here, with only one little

accomplishment, and that playing the piano, and now I can do all kinds of things, even to blackleading the grates, really very nicely, Mrs. Cunningham says.

How I am to give notice, I cannot think, as Mrs. Cunningham is just now not well, and any kind of shock, she says, might be very serious. It occurred to me rather wickedly this morning that perhaps I might have to run away, but of course I could not do that and leave the poor children all uncared for, as there is now no one but me to do anything for them.

A most wonderful thing happened on Tuesday. An envelope arrived addressed to me containing a ten pound note. There was no letter with it, or any writing whatever, and at first I thought it must have been meant for Mrs. Cunningham, who thought so too, but my name was written so clearly on the envelope that there really couldn't be any doubt. I got out with great difficulty on an errand for Mrs. Cunningham, and managed to buy two or three things that I was greatly in need of, as my wages have been rather irregular lately owing to poor Mrs. Cunningham's health. I should not mind that, were it not for a few little things they are in want of at home, and which I was counting on being able to send them. But now it is all right, for I sent them all the rest of the money at once, from the nearest post office, and kept back only one pound for my journey to Winfield when I can leave here.

I think I shall try to have a good night to-night, and then I shall feel able to give notice in the morning. I have tried once or twice during the day, since your kind letter came, but poor Mrs. Cunningham has always had a spasm just as I came near her.

I can't think who can have sent the money, because I know no one in London, at least no one who would be likely to send me money without saying a good deal about it. The dreadful thought has just occurred to me that perhaps a letter will follow saying that this money was not really a present at all, but was to be spent in some particular way. Dear Miss Graham, that would be most terrible. How I wish I had never thought this, because now I know I shall not sleep, and then I shall not be at all fit to be strong and determined in the morning. But if a letter *should* come saying that the money was not really mine, it would not be much good because it is all gone now, except the money I have in my box, and I am terrified that poor Mrs. Cunningham may ask me to lend her some of that, as her trustees are so very unbusinesslike and do not send her remittances at all regularly, she tells me; and if she does, I do not know how I can refuse after all her kindness.

But I must not trouble you with all my little trifling worries when you are so busy getting your new home ready and thinking about the almshouses.

Yours very truly and gratefully

LYDIA MITT

DENNIS ALBOURNE TO EDITH GRAHAM

MASON'S HOTEL
WEST 78TH STREET
NEW YORK

DEAR MISS GRAHAM (or perhaps I ought now to say DEAR MRS. HARBERTON),

I have wanted to write to you for so long, and several times I have begun a letter and then thrown it away—not in despair at being unable to express myself, but quite resignedly, feeling sure that you understood, and that my silence did not matter, and that when the time was ripe I should write quite naturally and easily, as I am doing now. I want to tell you that you are and have been the sweetest thing that has ever come into my life: in fact, that it is only the thought of you that keeps me going at all. I know you well enough to feel sure that you will accept this exactly as I offer it. My life has gone horribly wrong and is not likely in the ordinary course of things to get straight again, and you and I are probably destined to move far apart; but I cannot any longer refrain, even if I ought to, from telling you that I have loved you, and do love you, and shall love you whatever happens. I say, "even if I ought to refrain," but that is foolish between you and me: for you know, and I know, that love is not our own making, and that I have as much right to love you in the way in which I do love you as you

have to love a flower or one of Andrea's Madonnas. The only question is Should I tell you? but here I am not my own master, because I began to tell you my best secrets before I had been in your presence for half an hour (do you remember?) and even if that were not so I should tell you this, because I feel I have the right to give myself that joy. So there it is, dear dear friend.

I shall be in America for at least four months longer. After that I have no plans. If my letters home succeed I daresay I shall go to some other country and write about that in the same way. Mrs. Pink's generosity has made it possible for me to do this. But wherever I am I shall have your face before me, and if kind thoughts and devotion can hedge one about with happiness and security, you should be safe and happy indeed, whatever you may do and wherever and with whomsoever you may be.

Yours always

D. A.

EDITH GRAHAM TO DENNIS ALBOURNE

(Fragment)

CHURCH COTTAGE
WINFIELD

I am so glad you wrote. I thought you would: the delay did not perplex me. Your letter made

me very sad and very proud and happy too. Proud and happy because it is so beautiful to be loved and to feel that one is of some use—sad because your tone is so hopeless and I am so sorry for all that has happened. But you know that.

(Two or three weeks elapse)

ALGERNON FARRAR TO GWENDOLEN FROME

MERTON COLLEGE
OXFORD

MY DARLING GWEN,

Miss Graham made me promise to write and tell you all about it, or, as you jolly well know, I wouldn't. Writing is not my line of country.

I will begin at the beginning, which was a letter from Miss Graham asking me to take the motor to Bedford on Thursday in time to meet her at the station at 3 o'clock and be ready for a long run and a lark. So there I was with my little lot, dead up to time, and her train came in soon after, as near as white steam can manage it, and she jumped into the car with her traps and told me the whole story. I suppose you know it, but as you've been away from home so long perhaps you don't. Here goes, anyway.

There's a Miss Mitt, a little governess who has been fearfully sweated without getting any screw for ever so long, and who was so soft-headed or soft-hearted that she daren't either give notice or leave, although she was just dying to go to Winfield to look after the almshouses they are building there. And so the only thing to do was to kidnap her. It seemed to me downright sportsmanlike of Miss Graham to ask me to help. She would have asked me to do it alone, she said, only the little governess woman would have been so scared; but with her friend Miss Graham there it would be all right.

So we found out where the house was, and I stopped the car under some trees in a quiet road pretty near, and left Emmett with it, while Miss Graham and I toddled off to carry out her plans. First of all we had to go to a registry office and find a servant, and Miss Graham got an old trot after a good deal of messing about, and paid her a month's wages in advance, and told her to go to the sweater's house with her box that evening and say she had been engaged and paid for. You see unless something of that kind had been done the little governess woman wouldn't have stayed in the car a minute after she found we weren't going back, being just about as soft-headed as they make them. She'd have just taken a flyer for the next hedge and bucketed back to Bedford like a silly rabbit. Rather daring of Miss Graham, wasn't it?

And then we got a motoring hat and one or two little things, and I took these to the car and left Miss Graham outside the sweater's house.

Well, Miss Graham rang the bell, and it was answered by Miss Mitt herself, all hot and untidy from nigger work. How Miss Graham got her out I don't know, but she persuaded her just to dust herself a bit and walk to the end of the road, which she did in spite of the sweater's whimperings inside the parlour. And there was I just round the corner, all ready, standing by the car. "We're going home by road," Miss Graham said, "won't you get in a moment? I don't suppose you've ever been in a motor car." The little governess woman was all of a tremble to get back, because she said there was something in the oven, and the children would want her, and the sweater wasn't well to-day; but Miss Graham made her get inside a moment, and I whispered to Emmett that it was all right, and he started the car off with a jump and let her rip.

All this while Miss Graham was telling the little governess woman that she had left a note for the sweater saying that she wouldn't be going back again, and that we were off for Winfield, and all about the servant we had engaged, and that if her box wasn't sent on at once there would be a jolly old row; and after a while it was all right, although Miss Mitt kept on saying she must go home to the children. But by the time we got to Winfield, about ten o'clock, she was all right and had asked a lot

of questions about the machinery, which is always a sign you've got 'em.

I left her there safe enough this morning, and came back to Oxford with a beautiful yarn which Jack and I made up together about a sudden call to a sick relation, and although I'm gated for a week it's all right. Jack's awfully disgusted he wasn't told about it all and allowed to come too, but he's got to work, you know, and as I haven't got any brains it doesn't matter whether I do or not.

You darling Gwen [*a few lines omitted*].

FROM THE "DAILY TELEGRAPH"

Wanted at once. Governess for two children. Must be Lady. Music. Quiet refined home. Three servants kept. Apply Mrs. C., "Belle Vue," Bedford.

(A few weeks later)

FROM THE "WITFORD HERALD"

WINFIELD CORRESPONDENCE

A pretty wedding was solemnised in the Parish Church on Thursday last, when Mr. Lynn Harberton of the Manor House, the well-known critic and author, and Miss Edith Graham, his ward, also of Winfield, were joined in holy matrimony. The

ceremony was performed by the Rev. Augustus Frome, rector of Winfield, assisted by the Rev. Hercules Lenox, of Bath. Mr. Wordsworth Harberton acted as best man, and the bridesmaids were Miss Gwendolen Frome, Miss Eileen Somerscales and the Misses Joan and Phyllis Arundel. The bride's dress was of white Irish poplin, trimmed with old lace (the gift of Miss Fielding). The bridesmaids, in simple white muslin made up over silk, formed a charming bevy. The church, which was prettily decorated by Mr. Job Pedder (gardener to Lynn Harberton, Esq.), was filled with gentry and villagers. The service was interspersed by the hymns "Thine for ever" and "O perfect love," while at the close of the service Mendelssohn's Wedding March was played. Mr. Aaron Pullinger officiated at the organ with his customary skill, while his sister, Miss Ruth Pullinger, efficiently led the singing.

After the ceremony a reception was held in the spacious house and beautiful grounds of Gurney Arundel, Esq., which was numerously attended. The happy couple left early for their honeymoon at Fontainebleau. The pretty custom of showering rose leaves was substituted for that of rice.

Among the wedding presents were the following :—

Miss Charlotte Fase	Salad bowl with fork and spoon.
Mr. Algernon Farrar	Gold mounted êperne.

Mrs. Herbert Hyde	Warming pan.
Miss Eileen Somerscales	Painted d'oyleys.
Mr. J. L. Frome	Sluggard's friend.
Miss Adelaide Fielding	Ivory tea caddy.
Mr. Orme Rodwell	*The Inwardness of Giotto.*
Miss Gwendolen Frome	Cymric pendant.
Sir Herbert Royce	Rembrandt etchings and tiger skin rug.
Miss Lydia Mitt	Table centre.
Rev. Hercules Lenox	*English County Songs.*
Mrs. Trimber	Mantelpiece ornaments.
Mr. Job Pedder	Bible.

[*Many others omitted*]

The wedding cake, which was made by Mr. Flower of Witford, proved excellent eating.

THE BEGINNING

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